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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



STAND UP CARTOONIST ARNOLD ROTH AND FRIEND

On the Tonight show a week or so ago, cartoonist Arnold Roth was reflecting on the urge to doodle. At one point in the discussion, Johnny Carson observed that all of us go through a phase of drawing cartoons, but most of us outgrow it. Why, he wondered, hadn't Arnold?

"I guess I never lost my warp," offered Roth gleefully.

"You mean a time warp?" asked Carson.

"No," said Roth, "a warped warp." While Roth's career as a stand-up cartoonist is still budding, his ornately demented illustrations have been warping the pages of SPORTS ILLUSTRATED for nearly 20 years. His latest series of four-color hallucinations, on spring training, begins on page 36.

It didn't take much to get Roth cracking on this assignment. All Art Director Richard Gangel had to do was whisper the word "baseball" into the phone, and Roth was on a jet to Tampa faster than you could say "Pussy Caballero." Roth, you see, is a Philadelphia native who survives the winter only because the baseball season follows. Enduring year after year of defeat as a Phillies fan added a sense of proportion to his life; he now describes it as a sort of jolly fatalism. "Every April I'd wager that the Phils would win the World Series," says Roth. "But then, I also bet on Japan in World War II—of course, the Japanese were ahead at the time, which is more than I can say for the Phillies."

Losing, he says, is so reflexive to a Phillies fan that even in the final game of last year's Series, with two out in the ninth, two strikes on the Royals' Willie Wilson and the Phils up by three runs, Roth confidently expected Philadelphia to blow the lead, the game and the championship.

When Wilson finally struck out to end it all, Roth assumed the crowd-control police dogs had been sent out on the field to bite the players and bring them back to reality.

Roth's own sense of reality seems to lie somewhere out in leftfield. While a student at the Philadelphia College of Art in the late '40s, he'd play saxophone with a dance band until 3 a.m. and then show up two hours late for class. His penchant for burning the midnight oil instead of daubing it on canvas got him kicked out of school—a slight the college has since made up for by giving him an honorary degree and a one-man show. Years later, during a stint as the artist for SI's SCORECARD section, Roth returned home from a gig and, on deadline, executed sketches in his tuxedo. "The ideal togs for drawing with India ink," he says. "The stains never show."

One of his early SI cartoons, captioned "Real life is a magnacosh of sport," used to hang on a wall of our art department. "But Arnold," an editor would sometimes protest, "don't you know there's no such word as 'magnacosh'?"

"Of course I do," Roth would answer, tugging at his polka-dot bow tie, "and that's why you're an editor and I'm a cartoonist."

Philip D. Haskins



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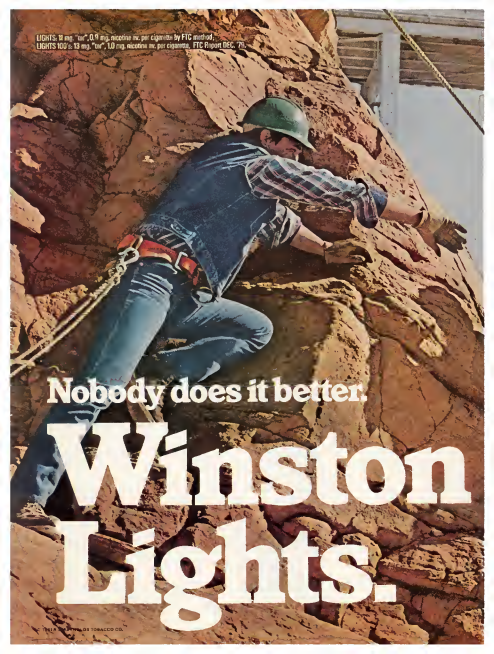


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SCORECARD

Edited by JERRY KIRSHENBAUM

IT'S TIME FOR THE NHL TO STOP THE HOOLIGANISM

In purporting to deal with the thuggery rampant in their game, NHL officials in recent days have gone through the usual motions of suspending and fining miscreants and launching investigations. Don't be fooled. It's those same officials who are most to blame for the inexcusable violence. They have tolerated and even promoted the cycle of physical intimidation and retaliation that reduces all too many NHL games to shambles and obscures the talents of stars like Los Angeles' Marcel Dionne, who would rather skate, stickhandle and play good hockey than be a party to Slap Shoot-style hooliganism. But Dionne finds this difficult. "You stand in front of the net and a guy will spear you with a stick or punch you in the face," he complains. "And [the referees] don't call it."

The NHL's lack of firm leadership helped bring about the disgraceful spectacle Thursday night at Boston Garden, where a brawl broke out seven seconds into a game between the Bruins and the North Stars and was followed by a dozen other fights, one of which spilled into the runway leading to the Minnesota locker room. The ugly night produced an NHL-record 406 penalty minutes and the ejection of 12 players. Minnesota Coach Glen Sonmor later admitted he had ordered his players to "do something" to refute opponents' taunts that his team was "gutless," and he warned that when the two teams play in Minnesota this week, Boston Coach Gerry Cheevers had "better bring a basket to take his head home in."

Reprehensible though Sonmor's words and deeds were, one NHL general manager says, "The league office has stood idly by while other teams have bullied the North Stars and taken endless cheap shots at them. Everybody knows that the North Stars have complained repeatedly to the league, but nothing has ever been done about it. So the North Stars took the law into their own hands, and how can you really blame them?"

The North Stars weren't the only vig-

ilantes in NHL rinks the last two weeks. Montreal Canadian Right Wing Chris Nilan sucker-punched the Washington Capitals' Alan Hangeleben and flung official Paul Flaherty to the ice, later explaining, "I went out there to get somebody." In another game, Washington's Paul Mulvey slammed his stick against the penalty box and had to be restrained from attacking its occupant, Quebec's Kim Clarkson. In Los Angeles six players were ejected when fighting got out of hand during a game between the Kings and Flyers. In Vancouver, there was a bench-clearing brawl between the Flyers and the Canucks, and the teams had to be sent to their dressing rooms with 2:26 left in the second period.

The culpability of the NHL brass begins with its preposterous view that "fighting is part of hockey." This policy is reflected both in the toothless penalties the NHL imposes for fighting and in a statement last fall to a Congressional subcommittee investigating sports violence in which NHL President John Ziegler said the league opposed "fighting just for the sake of fighting," but viewed "spontaneous" fighting as a justifiable "outlet for the frustration in hockey."

But fighting is an outlet for frustration has no place in sport. Like hockey, football is an emotional, contact game, but fighting isn't allowed—period. Even in boxing, which is fighting, the emphasis is on the control, not the venting of frustrations. A flustered boxer can always quit as Roberto Duran did, but he isn't permitted to exorcise his demons by hitting his opponent below the belt. There's no reason things should be any different in the NHL. Hockey is a swift, rugged sport in which crisp body checks are an integral part of the action. But the game is at its best only when there's no fighting, a fact borne out by the relatively clean play in amateur hockey and brought home to even the most casual fans by the stirring U.S.-U.S.S.R. showdown at Lake Placid. Significantly, the most gifted NHL players are those who can deal with their frustra-

tations without fighting. These include not only fancy-Dan performers like Dionne, Mike Bossy, Wayne Gretzky (page 18) and Guy Lafleur but also such bone-jarring clean checkers as Bob Gainey and Don Marcotte.

Rather than interpret rules to allow players to take out their frustrations by fighting, Ziegler should impose penalties that would rid the NHL of those unable to control themselves. In an open letter to Ziegler at the start of this season (SI, Oct. 13, 1980), Mark Mulvey, then SI's hockey editor and now assistant managing editor, suggested that fighting could be drastically reduced by imposition of a five-game suspension the first time a player drops his gloves or swings his stick and a 10-game suspension the second time—with the player's place on the roster left vacant. Another reform that could curb hooliganism: make a penalized team play shorthanded for the full term of a penalty, no matter how many goals its opponent scores.

Unfortunately, the NHL may have a motive other than the venting of frustration for condoning fighting and dirty play, a motive more appropriate to roller derby or professional wrestling. Asked last month about the notorious pugnacity of the Philadelphia Flyers, who have led the NHL in penalty minutes nine straight years, Ziegler replied that the Flyers are the NHL's best draw, then added, revealingly, "If the other 20 teams were as successful, I'd be pleased, regardless of how they achieved such success."

There's no doubt that the NHL sees fighting as good for business, pandering as it does to the blood lust of those spectators who happen to be turned on by brawling; but then, the hockey business is hardly booming. This is just one more reason the NHL's ruling hierarchy must do something, once and for all, about gratuitous violence. Failing that, people who love hockey can only pray that the NHL will pass into more capable hands or be supplanted by a rival league that has the real interests of the sport at heart.

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SCORECARD *continued*

ADOPT-A-TEAM

Miami has no major league baseball team nor any immediate prospects for obtaining one, but there's nothing to prevent its citizens from claiming a "step-team." So says *The Miami Herald*, which is holding an election among its readers to choose one of the existing 26 major league franchises as the city's home team by proxy. "The *Herald* wants a team for South Florida," the newspaper said last week in announcing the contest. "Of course, we can't kidnap one. So, let's do the next-best thing—let's adopt a team."

The *Herald* pledges to cover the winning team almost as if it were Miami-based—with "extra stories, weekly statistics, more in-depth coverage." The balloting will end March 24, with the winner to be announced just before Opening Day. Sports Editor Edwin Pope predicts that the Yankees, Mets, Phillies, Red Sox and Cubs will be the leading vote-getters, a morning line presumably attributable to the large numbers of Miamians who hail from New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Chicago. Pope expresses the hope that the adoption of a team may somehow hasten the day when "a real franchise" settles in Miami, which is the spring-training headquarters of the Baltimore Orioles but has only the Class A Miami Orioles to call its own during the regular season. In the meantime, the *Herald* suggests that the winner of its "adopt-a-team" poll had better be just that—a winner. It explains, "We will have the only team with an affiliation on a standby basis—if our adopted team louses up, we'll turn it back to the adoption agency."

HISTORIC BREAKTHROUGH

At its meeting last week in Los Angeles, the International Olympic Committee's executive board added the women's marathon to the program of events for the 1984 Games in L.A. Along with an IOC decision last summer to introduce a women's 3,000-meter run in '84, approval of the marathon, which will be run separately from the men's marathon but over the same course, represents a dramatic departure for the Olympics, which previously had no women's event longer than 1,500 meters.

The decision also amounted to eloquent acknowledgment of the boom in women's marathoning, an activity that was practically nonexistent a decade ago.

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Since then, 273 women aged 14 to 48 and hailing from 25 countries have run marathons in 2:55 or better. In recent years the world record for the event has dropped precipitously to 2:25:42, set by Grete Waitz of Norway in last year's New York Marathon, a time that would have won every Olympic men's marathon through 1948. At last summer's Avon International Marathon in London, one of two dozen women's distance races annually sponsored by Avon Products Inc., there were 232 entrants hailing from 27 countries and five continents. Those aren't mere statistics; IOC rules require that before a women's event can be included in the Summer Olympics, it must be regularly contested by athletes in at least 25 nations and on two continents.

For all that, the idea of a women's Olympic marathon was resisted by sports authorities in Eastern European countries, who stubbornly cling to the argument, now discredited almost everywhere else, that women are physiologically unsuited for distance running. But the real reason for the Eastern Europeans' opposition may be their fear that because of their traditional neglect of non-Olympic sports, it will take a while before they're able to challenge the U.S. and other Western countries in women's distance events. Significantly, the IOC executive board approved a women's marathon by a vote of 7-1, the lone dissenter being the Soviet Union's Vitaly Smirnov. Though not a member of the board, Arpad Csaradi of Hungary, president of the IOC's program commission, tried to persuade its members that the women's marathon was essentially an American event and was practically unknown in Europe. IOC Executive Director Monique Berlioux of France reminded Csaradi that the world-record holder is Norwegian, adding facetiously that to the best of her knowledge, Norway is a European country.

Among those who lobbied most effectively for last week's action was Kathrine Switzer, who in 1967 caused a sensation by running in the Boston Marathon, then a men-only event, despite efforts by a race official, Jock Semple, to shoot her off the course. Now the director of the Avon International Running Circuit, Switzer said she hoped that the women's marathon at the '84 Olympics will be scheduled to take place before the men's—"to give the men a time to shoot for."

REINTERPRETATION

Financially hard-pressed college athletic directors tend to be rather unhappy about Title IX, the law that prohibits sex discrimination in educational programs receiving federal aid. Until now, Title IX has been interpreted to mean that per-capita expenditures for women's sports programs in schools must be more or less the same as those for men's. But last week, ruling in a case involving a high school golf program in Ann Arbor, a U.S. district judge in Detroit, Charles W. Joiner, held that schools don't have to provide equal funds for men and women when the particular sport receives no direct federal funds—regardless of whether or not the school as a whole gets federal money.

Other judges may see things differently, but Joiner's ruling seems to imply that teams participating in intercollegiate and interscholastic athletics are entirely separate entities that don't have much to do with the schools they represent. This notion, carried to its logical conclusion, could make one wonder whether those teams should even exist. For athletic directors who might be tempted to applaud Joiner's decision, that's something to think about.

INCRIMINATING MALADY

Our get-well wishes to Deane Beman, commissioner of the PGA tour, who's currently recuperating from surgery for an ailment both painful and embarrassing: tennis elbow.

DOUBLE STANDARD

The Major League Baseball Players Association last week set a May 29 strike deadline in its continuing dispute with the owners over what further restrictions, if any, should be placed on a free agent's ability to negotiate with teams of his choice. For the past five years the association has accepted two limitations on its members' freedom to sell themselves to the highest bidder: 1) that only a player with six or more years of big league experience can peddle himself to other teams, and 2) that a club signing such a free agent normally must compensate the player's former team with an amateur draft choice. But the owners, unable to restrain themselves from bidding player salaries to astronomical levels, have been demanding further concessions that might help them exercise a bit of self-control: they ask

that any club signing a "ranking" player be obliged to compensate his former team with an active major-leaguer instead of a draft choice. Realizing that this would make most clubs think twice about signing high-priced free agents, the players association has rejected the proposal.

With the threat of a strike only too real, it is hoped that both sides will be flexible in working out an agreement. However, in arguing for greater limitations on free agency than the admittedly minor ones now in effect, the owners may have difficulty explaining away the fact that most Americans enjoy the right to sell themselves on the job market without any restrictions whatsoever. Thus, management's chief spokesman in the current dispute, Ray Grebey, assumed his position as the owners' director of player relations in 1978 after working for two decades for General Electric Co., which, so far as is known, didn't receive a dime—or an executive to be named later—in compensation for him from Bowie Kuhn's office. Then there's Harry Dalton, one of two management representatives on a player-owner committee that recently tried without success to resolve the dispute. When Dalton, seeking to improve his lot, quit as general manager of the California Angels in 1977 to accept the offer of a similar job with the Milwaukee Brewers, the Brewers weren't required to pay any compensation to the Angels. Asked last week how he could in good conscience try to subject the players to restraints that didn't apply to general managers, Dalton said lamely, "We're talking about two entirely different types of careers." And also, one gathers, about two entirely different sets of standards.

THEY SAID IT

- Donald Davidson, Houston Astro executive, extolling Pitcher Joe Niekro's ability to relax: "It takes him an hour and a half to watch 60 Minutes."
- Donna Horton White, after sinking a 25-foot putt in an LPGA tournament in Deerfield Beach, Fla. while seven months pregnant: "That putt was so good I could feel the baby applauding."
- Charlie Waters, Dallas Cowboy safety, after watching a computerized game matching the '71 Cowboys against a mythical team of all-time greats that included Jim Thorpe: "For an 84-year-old Indian, he showed me some moves." **END**

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AND NOW FOR MY REAPPEARING ACT

Magic Johnson has returned to the Lakers after a knee injury caused him to vanish for 100 days

by JOHN PAPANÉK

For Earvin (Magic) Johnson the One Hundred Days of Solitude were over. The long period of frustration and uselessness—the only such time in the 21 years of his blessed life—ended last Friday night. Johnson trotted onto the court at Los Angeles' sold-out Forum and brought 17,505 Laker fans to their feet. They remained standing and roaring, as it turned out, for 45 seconds, one second for each of the games Johnson had missed since he tore cartilage on the inside of his left knee on Nov. 18.



Johnson waved nervously to the crowd, then broke into that grin—the one that belongs in the *Guinness Book of World Records* for size and luminescence—and, as the noise grew, he spread his arms, palms up, as if to say, “Why are you people treating me this way? I’m just a basketball player and this is just another game. Against the New Jersey Nets, yet.”

His teammates, including Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, six times the NBA’s Most Valuable Player, joined in the ovation, and Laker Coach Paul Westhead seemed to be choking back

continued

tears. What was going on here? Just one more magical moment in the phenomenal career of Magic Johnson.

Just as injury is an inevitable adjunct to sport, so is the clichéd comeback. But there are comebacks and there are comebacks. Mickey Mantle folded his leg over his knee backward and came back. Rocky Bleier nearly had his foot blown away by a grenade and came back. Tommy John had his pitching arm reconstructed and came back. All Magic Johnson did was have a small piece of cartilage removed from his knee—a relatively minor procedure as knee operations go—and he is only 21 years old, for heaven's sake.

But the severity of the injury wasn't The Forum crowd's yardstick; it was responding to the persona of Johnson, the man-child who has never failed to live up to his nickname. Last year, his rookie season, he received most of the credit for nudging Abdul-Jabbar and the Lakers to the NBA championship. The year before that, as a sophomore at Michigan State, he led the Spartans to the NCAA championship, and in 1977 he led Lansing's Everett High to the Class A Michigan high school championship. He is a great basketball player and has never been anything but a winner, but beyond that he is as appealing as any public figure, perhaps more so.

"I do think about that," says Johnson with a puckish grin. "And ... I don't know, I guess I've been blessed. The strength comes from my father, the smile comes from my mother and ... well, I just don't know why it's me. It just is. But it was always me, long before I got all this stardom ... I mean, attention. I've always had it, and this goes all the way back to the first grade. Ask anybody in Lansing. They all know me."

This injury, which occurred when Atlanta's 7'2½" Tom Burleson fell across the back of Magic's knee on Nov. 11 but wasn't discovered until a week later, during a game with Kansas City, had a devastating effect on Johnson and the team. At the time the Lakers were 15-5. Johnson was averaging 21.4 points (up from his rookie average of 18.0), leading the NBA in steals and assists and out-rebounding all guards with 8.2 per game. Without Magic, the Lakers lost five of their next eight games. But without the Lakers, Magic lost much of his spirit. For the first time he had no team to be part of. He had come face to face with his own athletic mortality.

"It made me see that, just as fast as you can rise to the top, you can come tumbling down," he said last week. "First they take your ball away. That's bad. And then, not being around the guys, that really hurts. I mean, you're alone now, you see. That's my life, being around the fellas, talking jive, singing on the bus, that's the whole thing. All of a sudden that's all taken away. I don't think missing the ball was that important. Missing the fellas was badder than missing the ball."

Westhead, the scholarly 42-year-old coach, knew he had to keep the Lakers from nose-diving, but he also saw Johnson's injury as an opportunity for a little academic study. "I had seriously wondered if Magic was human," he says. "I



A small study in the stardom of the Magic

doubted that he was. The day before his surgery I thought, 'Gee, this guy's going to have surgery just like the rest of us.' The operation was at 8 a.m. on a Monday [Nov. 24], and I wanted to visit him. I didn't want to go too early because he would still be dozed up. I figured I'd go around six o'clock and find out what this guy was really like. So I went to the room and the door was closed and I thought, 'Aha! A sign! He's crying and moaning.' I pushed the door open and peeked in and there was Magic propped up in the bed with a Dodge cap on backward, a piece of apple pie shoved up under his face, watching a football game, yelling at his father and a bunch of friends playing cards to keep the noise down. I couldn't believe it. I walked away that night thinking, 'What does this guy have that no one I've ever known has?' I guess he's human, but it's only a guess."

Even before the cast on his knee was

removed, Johnson was already working indefatigably on his rehabilitation. He went home to Lansing over Thanksgiving and made two other trips there while away from the team. After their initial slump, the Lakers won five in a row, again lost five of eight, then went 17-7, ending up 28-17 for the 45 games they played without Magic. But it seemed that waiting for Magic was more important to the fans and the press than what the Lakers were doing without him, even though the Lakers had stayed close to Phoenix in second place in the Pacific Division.

"He's just one guy," Abdul-Jabbar would say. "He's special—he has great instincts and ability—but we're a team." Other Lakers said that the team could indeed win without Magic; it was Abdul-Jabbar they could never afford to lose.

Nonetheless, without their spiritual leader, the Lakers just weren't the same outfit. Without Magic, they could probably forget about becoming the first NBA team in 12 years to win back-to-back titles.

Even though he was still three weeks away from playing form, Johnson rejoined the team for practice on Feb. 2 and accompanied the Lakers on three road trips. His presence lifted everyone's spirits immediately. "I was pleased with the way we carried on without him," says Westhead. "But when Magic wasn't with us our performance—in practices, games, trips—was surgical: neat, clean, minimal talking, no nonsense. But when Magic returned it was like *Looney Tunes*. He created havoc. Everybody started laughing again. It was unreal."

The final road trip—Chicago and Milwaukee—took its toll on Johnson. He was besieged by reporters and asked the same questions over and over again: Was the knee all right? Would he be the same Magic? Would the team, now playing well without him, have to readjust? Did the other players resent all the attention that was being directed to a non-playing member? "What do you think?" said Johnson, in T shirt and jeans and not smiling, waving to a roomful of ignored uniformed Lakers. In practice that last afternoon in Milwaukee, Magic had passed his final test: as he marched up against bruising Mark Landsberger in a full-court two-on-two game, the exercise disintegrated into an ugly shouting match. "Everybody had finally had it," says Assistant Coach Pat Riley. "That meant only one thing. Magic was ready."

Back in Los Angeles, preparations were made for his return. At The Forum, 17,505 buttons reading "The Magic Is Back" would be distributed, two Magic Johnson Jogging Suits would be awarded to lucky ticket-holders. All over town his face, thirsting for 7-Up, beamed from billboards. His television commercials for the soft drink are a critical success, as is his spot for Buick with Willie Shoemaker. In fact, a new Buick ad is being shot this week and will be aired during the Academy Awards telecast later this month. In Los Angeles Magic Johnson is bigger than Bo Derek, than Steve Garvey, even, and he's making a serious run at Ronald Reagan for popularity. He was forced to darken the windows of his gold Mercedes, he says, for fear of causing accidents when people recognized him on the freeways. "If he keeps his head in perspective much longer, he'll be too wonderful for words," says Riley.

"The thing about Magic that amazes me," says Jamaal Wilkes, "is his timing. He's always at the right place at the right time—in high school, college and the pros. Look at the last playoff game. Everybody remembers it as 'Magic's Game' [Johnson had 42 points, 15 rebounds, seven assists and three steals as the Lakers beat Philadelphia for the championship while Abdul-Jabbar was out with an injury]. And look at him now, coming back as he is, a month before the playoffs. The spotlight's all his. And nobody on the team resents him at all. We love him. The only athlete I've ever seen who is like him is Ali."

Says Westhead, "Magic's timing is always too good for chance."

When the day finally arrived for Magic to play, though, he admitted, "I'm real scared. Like it's a first game." On the way to the court Friday night, Westhead asked Johnson if he knew Spanish.

"No," said Magic. "Why?"

"There's a word for what I want you to be tonight," said the coach. "Suave, suave. Easy, easy."

"I gotcha, Coach."

Johnson sat the bench while his teammates, unnerved by the pregame hysteria, made one of their sloppiest starts of the season. With 5:02 left in the first period and the Lakers behind 19-14, Westhead sent Magic in for Wilkes. Every delicate step and slide was scrutinized—L.A. owner Jerry Buss admitted being "scared to death"—while the crowd waited for the magic to begin. It took a

while. Johnson threw his first pass directly to the Nets' Maurice Lucas, then tossed another out of bounds. He missed his first two shots—both awkward hooks. But in the second period he scored nine points and began diving on the floor for loose balls. At one point he collided violently with Lucas and went sprawling, but he got up easily and later said, "I'm glad he knocked me down. I need to be knocked around."

Johnson's shooting was off the mark. Against New Jersey he made just four of 12 from the floor. (Two days later, before another sellout crowd at The Forum, he connected on only four of 11 in a 101-96 loss to the Suns.) But Johnson's contributions cannot be measured solely in baskets. And in the fourth period of his comeback game against the Nets he showed that the magic was really back. With the Lakers ahead 103-98, Johnson had the ball on the left wing. As Mike O'Koren dug in against him, Magic slapped the ball and yelled, "Here we go!" He faked twice, drove to the lane, then pitched to an open Norm Nixon for a 15-foot jumper. As the Lakers clung to a 105-103 lead with 10 seconds left, Magic crashed the offensive boards to retrieve a missed shot by Michael Cooper. It was his 11th rebound of the game (to go with 12 points in 24 minutes) and the act that preserved the victory. He dribbled around while the crowd screamed, then passed to Abdul-Jabbar, who was fouled and made two free throws to end the game at 107-103.

Magic's postgame media crush was enormous. The knee felt fine, he felt fine, the team was fine, he said. "Now I think all of you can leave me alone." Few did. They listened and listened some more, watching him undress and cut tape from his ankles. After an hour he looked up and still saw half a dozen reporters watching him. All the other players were gone. He stood up, looked around and said, as if he were the host of a party, "So now, if you all don't mind, it's been a wonderful evening. It's over. The night is over. I'm well. You can all go back to your certain cities, have a nice plane ride, I'm—going—to—take—a—shower."

The reporters lingered another few moments, long enough to hear loud, incredibly loud semi-musical sounds coming through the metal doors to the showers. The Jacksons' *Heartbreak Hotel* and Teddy Pendergrass' *Love T.K.O.* Magic was all alone. But he was singing. **END**



Lucas gave Magic a homecoming hard, sort of

The thing about watching Wayne Gretzky now, today, is that we still don't really believe what we see. He can't be that good. No way. They must be handing assists out in Edmonton as if they were programs. Five goals and two assists against St. Louis, the No. 1 team in hockey this year, in one game? A fluke. The goalie must have been offed. What the heck, the kid's only 20, and a young 20 at that—his birthday was January 26—with a still-boyish, 165-pound build. If he's that good now, what will he be like when he grows up?

You can sense his Oilers teammates wondering about the same thing—and his opponents brooding over it. Where lies the zenith? Gretzky is already the best offensive player in the game, and he is probably still six years from his prime. He will own the '80s, breathe new life into the NHL cadaver and shatter the scoring records for forwards, as Bobby Orr did a few years ago for defensemen. Last year, after one season in the now-defunct WHA, Gretzky was the NHL's MVP, and he tied Los Angeles' Marcel Dionne for the scoring title with 137 points. Only Orr and Phil Esposito have surpassed that total. Now in his second year, he is the league leader with 42 goals and 79 assists. In the coming weeks he will challenge Esposito's record of 152 points in a season. It won't be a fluke if he breaks it. Gretzky is the most exciting, most effective scorer in the game. He is that good. And he'll only get better.

Gretzky is currently enjoying one advantage that he'll probably never have against few opposing coaches can accept that a kid his age and size is capable of dominating their teams. Utterly dominating them. Playing keep-away with the puck. They see it and still don't believe it. In a few years every club will have its own specially devised way to defend against Gretzky, but for now he's get-



GOING FOR BROKE AT BREAKNECK SPEED

Edmonton's 20-year-old Wayne Gretzky is pursuing an "unbreakable" record

by E.M. SWIFT

ting some skating room. As Glen Sather, Edmonton's coach and general manager, says with a knowing smile, "Believe it or not, some hockey people still think of Wayne as a flash in the pan."

That won't be the case for long. Last week the Oilers journeyed to Los Angeles to play the Kings. Afterward, Dionne, who trails Gretzky by 12 points in the scoring race, said, "Gretzky's carrying the whole team offensively. He con-

trols the game. It's a thrill to play against him." The Kings beat Edmonton 5-2, holding Gretzky to one assist but, said Dionne, "You can see for yourself what we think of him." He pointed to the blackboard in the Los Angeles locker room. There, beside the Oilers' starting line up, Coach Bob Berry had written.

- Gretzky—leading scorer, NHL
- Must be aware of him at all times
- Likes to shoot against the flow
- Likes to get to blue line and "buttonhook" defense; force him outside
- Be alert for long pass to him up the middle

—Likes to set up behind our net; try to make him go to his backhand

In summing up the Edmonton club's other strengths, Berry had written, "This team works very hard."

The reason Gretzky commands his own special scouting report is that he plays a game that—like Orr's—is entirely his own. It's as if he had learned it on a different planet. Only the Islanders' Bryan Trottier can approach Gretzky's mastery of play behind the net, where he ducks down and feeds passes to teammates swarming into the slot. If no one comes after him, he darts in front of the goal himself. The best stick handler in the NHL, he practices the art in the summer with a tennis ball on his driveway. "It's harder to stick-handle with a tennis ball than a puck," he says simply.

He can swat pucks out of the air as if they were beach balls, which makes it easy to hit him with a long pass. And he is faster than he looks, especially from a standing start. His own passing is superb. His shot, while not overpowering, is surely as accurate as his passing—he scored 51 goals last season—but what everyone mentions first is Gretzky's anticipation. He thinks on another level out there, he's one step ahead, constantly aware of the entire ice, more like a chess master than a hockey player.

Last Wednesday, the night after their loss to the Kings, the Oilers, who at week's end were 21–32–10 and in a tight battle for the 16th and final playoff spot, defeated Philadelphia for the first time in their history. Before the game the word in the press lounge was that Gretzky disappears against the Flyers, that he turns squeamish at the thought of their rough stuff, that he has a perpetual case of Philadelphia flu. Not so. The Flyers had taken a 2–0 lead in the second period. Then Gretzky took charge. In the last 21 minutes of play he had two

goals and two assists as Edmonton scored six unanswered goals.

Afterward, Philadelphia Coach Pat Quinn, looking slightly dazed, said, "He does that to a lot of clubs, but he hasn't been able to do it to us before." Seeing was believing. You can bet that when the Flyers cross the Oilers' path this week, Gretzky will have Mel Beidman's axlike stick hacking at him all night long. If you can't beat him, cleave him.

Surprisingly, Gretzky has suffered little thuggery in his brief NHL career. "The players are dirtier in junior hockey, where they'll do anything to get noticed," says Gretzky, who should know. A junior coach once offered \$25 to any kid who could knock him out of the game. "Guys respect you when you get up here," Gretzky says. "Nobody's trying to hurt you. Some guys hit me, but guys miss me a lot, too."

In a game last season in Pittsburgh, Kim Clarkson was trying to cover him. As Gretzky broke past, Clarkson hooked him around the face. What ensued was a 59-minute brawl, highlighted by four separate fights between Clarkson and Dave Semenko, Edmonton's unfriendly giant. Gretzky, who is something of a showboat, wasn't seriously cut, and his first smiling words to the trainer were, "How's the crowd taking this?"

Edmonton players refer to Gretzky as "the Franchise," and you don't mess with

the franchise. Before one game against Detroit last year, Oiler Defenseman Lee Fogolin skated up to Dennis Polonich, the Red Wings' pugnacious center, and said, "If you touch the kid, you'll have to deal with me."

Still, Sather doesn't believe the other clubs have tried to intimidate his young star. "A lot of guys are in awe of Gretzky's kind of ability," says Sather. "It's one thing to run at an average player, but a superstar is something else. Nobody ever really tried to hurt Bobby Orr, either. Sure, you hit the guy, but maybe you pull back a little."

Should Gretzky continue scoring at the nearly two-points-per-game clip of the past 40 games, he will break Esposito's single-season mark, once considered as safe as, well, Ruth's 714 home runs. When Esposito got his 76 goals and 76 assists in 1970–71, he was in on 38% of Boston's league-record 399 goals. Gretzky has either scored or set up a staggering 49% of Edmonton's 248 goals. While some members of the press have tried to diminish Gretzky's statistics by saying he couldn't score as often if he played for a winning team, his coach believes the opposite is true.

"When you're on a losing club, there aren't as many guys helping you," says Sather. "He doesn't have Orr passing him the puck, the way Esposito did. What would he do if he had Charlie Simmer on his line, or Mike Bossy?"

"But I don't give a damn what Wayne does personally. The only measure of a great player is if he plays on a Stanley Cup winner. A Lafleur, an Orr, a Howe, a Hull, a Richard—they give you that little extra edge. They make their teammates play on a little higher level. I've never said publicly that Wayne belongs in that class yet." Sather pauses to smile. "And I'm not going to say so now."

That's all right, Glen. Wait a couple of years. We're not ready to believe it yet, anyway.

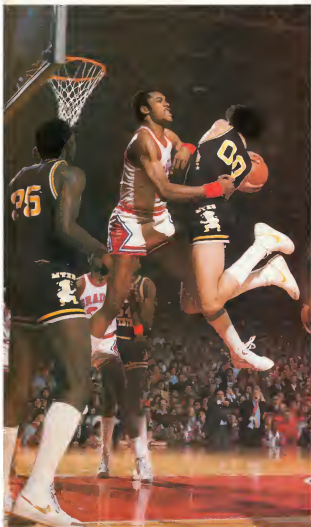
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At week's end, Gretzky was closing in on Phil Esposito's season scoring mark



HIGH TIMES FOR THE VALLEY

Not long ago, the Missouri Valley Conference appeared to be running a fast track to extinction, but now, with an infusion of outstanding players and coaches, the far-flung league is reviving memories of its glorious past by **CURRY KIRKPATRICK**



At Bradley there is a coach whose mother wrote *The Flying Nun* and whose grandfather, he claims, introduced broccoli to America. The coach says his players' brawls in the locker room—the media are asked to leave on these occasions—merely indicate their "school spirit."

At Tulsa there is a scorekeeper who might duke it out with the devil—forget school spirit—or anybody else who wants to question his foul count. Meanwhile, the student section is equipped with mop wigs, black suits, gorilla outfits and violin cases, the better to portray a certain rival head coach and his assistant as members of the Mafia.

At Drake a player named Pop until this season ran out for the intros popping a finger as a warning to the opponents' bench. And then he popped kisses on his teammates right there at center court. At Southern Illinois scores of fans behind the backboard wave miniature backboards at opposing foul shooters. In the midst of the confusion waves a sign reading **PACK ONE**.

At Wichita State two young and gifted forwards unload astonishing dunk shots while reporters unload astonishing charges of coaches financing everything from clothes to a player's former girl friend's abortion. According to *The Kansas City Times*, the Wheatshockers lead the nation in sham as well as slam.

Well, now, if it isn't the Missouri Valley Conference alive and kicking again. All 10 schools, eight states and three time zones. Sprawling as it does all over the Midwest, "the Valley" has long been the passion pit of college basketball, lending the game spectacle and scandal, a couple of two-time national championship teams and characters ranging from the unforgettable Oscar Robertson to the forgotten Levern (Jelly) Turt. My goodness, old Ronnie (Jelly Bean) Reagan, himself, even did some play-by-play in the conference way

A flying tackle by Bradley's Donald Reese stops a drive to the basket by Wichita State's Jones.

back before he discovered Frank Sinatra.

But then hard times befell the Valley. The railroad died or something. But with the arrival of Larry Bird, new coaches and aggressive recruiting came a commitment to get the conference amovin' again.

To set the record straight, there is no valley in the Valley anymore; today there isn't even a league member in the state of Missouri. Its heart and soul lie in places like Peoria and Des Moines, which are favorite buzz words in the routines of stand-up comedians. Look, lady, they loved me in Des Moines. How, how, how. Oh, but the people in the Missouri Valley Conference do enjoy their college basketball.

After a season brimming over with surprise and controversy and the usual junior-college transfers, the Missouri Valley headed into this week's postseason tournament with five teams hopeful of bids to the NCAA or NIT tournaments, three of those staring at the possibility of 20 or more victories, and one fully capable of challenging for the national championship. That is, if Wichita State doesn't stumble and trip over all the Monopoly money being hurled its way by witty fans conversant with the NCAA investigations.

By the time the regular season reached its crescendo in Peoria last Thursday with a booster luncheon featuring Howard Cosell, Al McGuire and Marlon Brando, a student pep rally attended by the deceased General George C. Patton, and then the big game in Robertson Memorial Field House between Bradley and Wichita State, the Missouri Valley had come all-the way back to a prominence it last attained before schools like Louisville and Cincinnati went high tone and left the league.

In truth, Cosell, McGuire, Brando and George C. Scott (as Patton) weren't on hand in Peoria, but a talented local TV guy name of Dave Snell, who does wunnerful impersonations, was. Snell's wide-ranging repertoire also included the schools' curly-perm coaches, Dick Versace of Bradley and Gene Smithson of Wichita State.

The real Versace and Smithson, old friends from high school coaching days around Chicago, chided each

As Bradley's Anderson discovered, the Shockers can be very shocking at both ends of the court

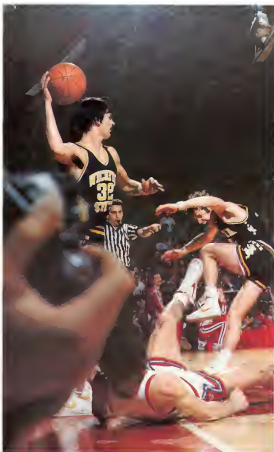


other back and forth. On Wichita losing two of its previous three games and a virtual lock on the league title, Versace said, "I'm giving Gene a crate of apples to replace the ones which got stuck in his guys' throats." On Versace's use of multisyllabic words, Smithson said: "Sometimes what emits from Dick's oral cavity is nothing more than fecal material."

Addressing the coaches' appearance, league Commissioner David Price called the game "the battle of the hairdressers." But what it turned out to be was a showcase for the Shockers' brilliant corner tandem of Cliff Levingson, who controlled the boards, and Antoine Carr, who made nine of 11 shots and scored 20 points in Wichita's 70-57 going-away win. It was the visitors' 21st victory in 25 games and it halted a Bradley home-court winning streak of 30. More important, the victory gave the Shockers the MVC regular-season championship and what seems likely to be a schedule of four home games (three in the MVC playoffs, then a probable first-round bye followed by a second-round game in the NCAA tournament) en route to the Midwest Regional in New Orleans, "where we will get recognized and, ahem, established," quoth Levingson.

The Wichita-Bradley clash, along with those schools' bitter battles with revitalized, second-place Tulsa, has elicited as much nostalgia for the old days as excitement in the new. The Missouri Valley is one of the oldest conferences going, the first intercollegiate athletic organization west of the Mississippi when it was formed in 1907 by, among others, Dr. James Naismith, always a handy fellow to have around, his having invented basketball and all.

They used to call it "the valley of death, the place you went when you were on your way to somewhere else." And that is exactly where a lot of member schools have gone over the years. More than half a century ago some disgruntled state universities pulled out of the Valley. Their conference is now known as the Big Eight. Six years ago some other former members created the Metro Conference. Uncertainty, change, turmoil, ambivalence toward football; all these have contributed to the ebb and flow of tides in a league that's about as far away from real tides as a league can get. Twenty-nine different schools have been members of the Missouri Valley Conference over the years, including Oklahoma A&M and



Wichita's Smithson fouled Bradley's Peck Malmgren even before Jay Jackson could rebound the ball.

Cincinnati, both of which won back-to-back NCAA titles when they belonged.

Iowa (current leader in the Big Ten), Missouri and Kansas State (first and second in the Big Eight), Houston (a power in the Southwest Conference), Louisville (the defending national champion), Grinnell (Grinnell?)—all played in the Valley. In 36 NCAA tournaments, Valley teams have won their way to the final four 17 times.

Valley basketball fortunes declined in

the '70s as other leagues began recruiting the Southern black athlete, who had been the backbone of the conference. In 1973 Memphis State reached the NCAA finals with Larry Kenon, then left the league. In 1975 Louisville made it to the final four with Junior Bridgeman and also departed. The Valley began its latest recovery three seasons ago when two strong basketball schools—Creighton and Indiana State—became eligible for conference play. With the Apke brothers (Tom



As long as he makes tomahawk dunks like these, Carr needn't worry about getting enough linelight

coaching, Rick playing). Creighton immediately won the conference. The following season there were Larry Bird and Indiana State, and people discovered the Valley all over again.

Last season two more terrific players caused notice all by themselves. One of them was West Texas State's 5' 9" transfer, Terry Adolph, who had established assist records at Portland State while feeding Freeman Williams, the two-time national scoring champion. Adolph came

into his own, leading the nation in steals, according to unofficial statistics, and performing so impressively on the NIT's summer all-star tour that officials changed the eligibility rule so he could tour this year even if West Texas didn't make the tournament. Last December, after Adolph scored 25 points and added 10 assists against Nevada-Las Vegas, Rebel Coach Jerry Tarkenton called him "the best point guard in the country."

Drake's 6' 6" Lewis Lloyd, who once

said his goal was to be "a car mechanic," was hitting on all cylinders in 1979-80, finishing second in the country in both scoring and rebounding. Though hampered by a broken right leg early this season, Lloyd has recovered to rank fourth in scoring with a 26.1 average. He scored 37 of Drake's 59 points in regulation time—and 41 overall—against Creighton on Feb. 19, and two nights later he got 37 (while Pop Wright was popping baskets for 39 more) as Drake continued



Lloyd: unafraid of opponents and Presidents.



Adolph is one of the nation's top players.



With Merin providing badly needed help at guard, Weichte won the MVC regular-season title.

THE VALLEY continued

upset Tulsa 107-87. Secure in his talent, Lloyd once was introduced to President Jimmy Carter. "Hello," he said. "I'm Lewis Lloyd, the Magic Man."

The main reason folks don't know Adolph and Lloyd better is that Missouri Valley operates without a conference television package. Breaking all nonappearance records, the Valley also has not once showed up on the cable sports network. ESPN, though this week's tournament will finally take care of that oversight.

Both Versace and Smithson arrived at their respective schools three years ago with controversial backgrounds and massive winning totals—not to mention quivering hair dryers—wagging behind them. Versace had been an Army brat, a college boxer, a streetwise hustler, a high school English teacher and a basketball coach at nearly all the levels. He quoted Ralph Waldo Emerson and listened to Jackie Wilson. His mother, the author Teré Rios, sent him miniature dragons from all over the world. He called himself "the last of the pirates." His first Bradley team went 9-17.

Versace raged in the papers at home, charged the stands at Tulsa and once issued a warning about a longtime fan (who wore a swallowtail coat) at Drake: "If that undertaker comes near my huddle, he'll need a coffin for himself."

On another memorable occasion, Versace was slapped by a female coach for his abusive language. Another woman, in a lounge, was more gentle. "She walked over to the bar and said she'd always wanted to do two things," Versace remembers. "Touch my hair and let me know I was a horse's ass."

Last season Versace showed his true colors. He often dressed completely in black, got a perm clip, notified everyone it was "silver hair, not gray" and brought in "the Sheriff," David Thirdkill, along with a passel of other junior college transfers to help his marvelous scorer, Mitchell Anderson, take the Braves to their first outright conference championship in 30 years.

When the stocky Versace—long a, soft c, silent e—"Dixie to my friends; Al McGuire calls me that.") and his associate coach, Tony Barone, a swarthy, squat chap who used to be a hawthorn for the Cubs, come swaggering and sneering into Valley arenas, it looks like *The Godfather III* is about to begin. Unfortunately, the 18-8 Braves continued

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haven't played up to last season and Versace's self-described "capers" have been confined to Bradley's split decisions with Tulsa.

At home Versace got into a verbal tussle with first-year Golden Hurricane Coach Nolan Richardson, who is given to doffing his jacket and flexing his considerable biceps. "No black bleeper shows his muscle and tells an Italian to go any bleeping place in his own bleeping house," says Versace. "I called Nolan a bleeper bleeping rookie." In the rematch at Tulsa, some of the students tried to emulate Versace by powdering their hair and wearing suits similar to his. It seemed that everybody but the scorekeeper was on him all night. The scorekeeper was cooling it; earlier in the season he had nearly come to blows with West Texas Coach Ken Edwards. With less than four minutes to go and his team behind by 16 points, Versace blew up at the refs and got himself heaved. "I thought I'd get shot," he said. "I wanted out real bad."

Two nights earlier Wichita State had administered an 87-65 pounding to Bradley—Carr and Livingston having combined for 38 points and 20 rebounds—and the Valley race seemed over. But suddenly the Shockers lay down and relaxed, losing two two-point games, to Tulsa and New Mexico State, and setting up last week's dramatic confrontation. A defeat at Bradley would have dropped them into a probable tie for the championship.

Smithson, however, had recruited too many horses for that, and his team had too much MTXE. This had been Smithson's slogan at Illinois State, where he won 66 games in three years and remained uninvited to the NCAA tournament. He still uses it at Wichita State. It stands for "mental toughness extra effort," and Smithson has emblazoned it on pennants, towels, buttons and the team uniforms. He even had it copyrighted. In New York a wag saw Smithson's button and asked, "What's this idiot running for?" and in his first season at Wichita a local writer mocked Smithson's initials as "more turnovers extra errors."

But then came the flood tide—last year's recruiting coup of Carr, the hometown phenom, and Californians Livingston and Center Ozell Jones—and Smithson was chuckling into his bushy mustache. Nonetheless, a year ago the Shockers were too young to make a



Bradley's Versace is the coach with the curls

move, and they finished in a three-way tie for second place, with a 17-12 overall record. But excessive youth was not the only handicap. The coach's son, Randy, slow and limited in everything but brains and guile, had too much responsibility in the backcourt. And Carr and Livingston competed against each other.

"It was all individualism to see who was the better player," says the 6'8" Livingston.

"I tried to stand out, make all the dunks. Block every shot. I didn't want to share any of the limelight," says Carr, who stands an inch taller than his teammate.



Wichita's Smithson is the coach with the curls

This season, however, the two forwards have rapidly matured into team-oriented, all-round customers. In addition, the Shockers brought in Point Guard Tony Martin from Casper (Wyo.) J.C. who has been able to penetrate and deliver the ball to the sophomore dunkers as well as enable young Smithson to move out on the wing, where he's more effective. Randy Smithson and Martin combined for 29 points and 13 assists of their own in the shredding of Bradley.

For their part, Carr and Livingston have averaged a combined 33.3 points and 18 rebounds a game and the former has become an outstanding defensive player, with 43 blocks. Wichita State has been outscored in its five defeats by only one, seven, two, two and three points. The most recent setback occurred last Saturday in a meaningless 75-72 loss at Indiana State, whose emotional Sycamores played as if Bird were still there, especially after Carr got kicked out of the game for elbowing early in the second half. "The only times we lose are when we don't play hard," Randy Smithson said afterward.

Sadly, though, Wichita has lost something even when the team has played hard and won, Livingston's nickname—"Good News"—supplies the irony in the Shockers' roller-coaster season of success on the court and controversy off it.

The bad news is that, according to published reports, the former girl friend of a Wichita player had an abortion at the urging of the Wichita coaches, paid for by the athletic department, so that the player could remain in school.

Added to this messy business were assertions in *The Kansas City Times* by former Wichita players that the coaching staff regularly paid out crisp \$100 bills for plane flights, clothes and parties. Wichita State Athletic Director Ted Bredehoff emphatically denied all, and last week Smithson begged off the subject, predicting that the emergence of his team and the league as a whole would make both Wichita and the Valley "household words."

Nevertheless, on Saturday the crowd in Terre Haute was shouting at Smithson, "Gene, if I get an Afro, will you slap me a hundred?"

At this point in the Missouri Valley's rejuvenation, the conference must wonder if becoming a household word again is worth the trouble.

To be physical, to be in sports, was what mattered to Kenny Wright. Then, two years ago, the active life abruptly, freakishly, ended *by FRANK DEFORD*

KENNY, DYING YOUNG

September 27 last was a beautiful clear day in Connecticut, kissed by the first crispness of the early autumn. The leaves were only starting to turn, but in a couple of weeks the hills around Ledyard would be in full blaze. September 27 was a football Saturday. If the day had been warmer, in another season, the shooting would have taken place at the beach instead of out in the quiet woods, among the cedars and the pines.

Around one in the afternoon, Brian Taylor came by and picked Kenny Wright up at the trailer where Kenny lived with his divorced mother. Wright was 24 then, but still known for the fine and fearless high school football player he had been; he had set school records, and in his senior year, as a tight end, had made all-conference.

As the two young men departed, Kenny told his mother, Phyllis, that they were just going for a ride. Kenny knew this was a lie. He knew he wanted to stop first at his father's house to get a sawed-off 12-gauge shotgun, to use as a weapon, not for recreation. He and Brian picked up another friend of theirs, Billy King. And, even though Brian and Billy were far away from Kenny when he fired the awful shot a few hours later, they have been charged as accomplices in manslaughter two.

We overemphasize sport in so many ways. Colleges sell their souls to stock winning teams. Grown men take games they watch on TV more seriously than their wives and children. Every year so many little boys from the streets trade in their chances for an education to chase after the rainbow of play-for-pay. Say this for Kenny Wright: he never let himself be deluded by athletics. They were never a means to an end. He only dealt in them for love.

His father, the older Ken Wright, pleaded with him to go on to college, to buy a diploma and more childhood



with four more autumns on the gridiron, but as much as the boy adored football, he knew that he couldn't take four more years of studying, that it was time to get a job.

But to be in sports, to be active—that was always what motivated him, diverted him from the less active pleasures of life

"My youngstah just lived for his sports," Phyllis Wright says. She always calls him that—"my youngstah"—in her native New England accent.

There are so many kids like Kenny. Even when he wanted to be by himself, to be contemplative, in his way, it had to involve sports. He could not sit and

read or even remain long before the TV. He didn't watch a whole lot of television except for sports. Instead, he would take a gun and tramp through the woods, hunting small game, rabbits or squirrels or birds. His father had schooled him in that when he was still a young boy.

But it was never important to Kenny that he find something to kill. He wouldn't even consider going off with his uncle in the autumn to shoot deer up in Maine. In a way, the only shot that ever mattered, in the woods, was the one he fired on September 27. "He just liked being active so," Phyllis says. "Lots of times he'd never even shoot at all. He just liked it out there: life all around him, but still alone."

The other thing Kenny did by himself was build up his body. Brian remembers that Kenny started that at a very young age, before other boys got into weights. He bought his own equipment. He read body-building magazines and followed their guidance. Bill Mignault, the football coach at Ledyard High, says, "Kenny was very proud of his athletic ability. He was very proud of his strength. And he was very proud of his appearance."

When Kenny graduated in 1974, his classmates voted him Class Bod (male division), and he posed with Kathy Nason (female division winner) for the yearbook. In that old photo, there is a smile playing across Kenny's face, but in those jet eyes of his there seems to be an underlying sense of pride, too. Class Bod was not just a gag honor. Kenny Wright wore his body well, and it mattered to him in ways that were right. He was always a physical person.

Oh sure, he liked a lot of other things. He liked parties. He liked girls. He liked to go to the Brookside Inn in Preston and drink a few beers with his buddies and shoot some pool and play some electronic TV games or punch up the James Taylor and Neil Young numbers on the jukebox.

But he couldn't be happy long if he wasn't active. "He was such an aggressive-type guy," says Brian, the best friend Kenny ever had. "We were very tight," Brian says. Some people said Kenny could be too tough, could be a brawler. "No, he was never malicious," Brian says. "The fun, sports—that's what he lived for." That is almost exactly what Phyllis says.

continued

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DANIEL MAPPA



Sports put a lot of structure into Kenny's existence. At Ledyard High his grades were invariably better during the football season, even though that was when he had to devote so much of his free time to practicing. His temper was contained during football. "Football kept Kenny involved and more active in everything," says Mignault.

And it is true that the only time Kenny really floundered in his life was after he finished school and there was no more football to point to in the fall. He had never been afraid of a fight, but now he grew afraid he might miss one. Fighting was fun for him, and nobody frightened him. Once, in a diner, he took on half a dozen sailors. And he started it. Another time, Kenny flailed out and hurt a cop who was trying to break up a fight. "He wasn't the goodest boy then," Phyllis says. Kenny cooled off in the slammer a couple of times for breach of the peace. It was a very exasperating time for everybody. In dismay, Kenny's father once said to Phyllis, "How can you still love him?" But it was mostly a matter of understanding. As Brian said, Kenny wasn't malicious. He just hadn't grown up yet, and liked to scrap. Everybody knew that, and that would be his bad luck.

And, anyway, he found another, healthier outlet soon enough. He began to scuba dive, to spearfish. Ledyard, where Kenny lived, is in from the water, colonial rural. There are stylish riding horses here and there, but also, as one sees out in the wide-open spaces, the road signs have been dimpled by sharpshooters and there is a Grange Hall. Yet the sense of the sea is great, even in the hollows. Ledyard lies near the Thames River, and 10 miles downstream, toward where it flows into Long Island Sound, are New London and Groton, the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and the nuclear submarine base. The college boys from Harvard and Yale race their shells on the Thames, just south of Ledyard, every June.

A few miles up the coast to the east of the Thames is Mystic, a restored whaling town, and it was there, where the Mystic River pours out toward Mason Island, that Kenny did most of his diving and fishing. There was no stopping him once he had mastered it. He would put on his wet suit and go in no matter how cold it was. Even if there was a thin layer of ice, he'd sometimes go under. He had

confidence that he would break out through the surface if it came to that.

He loved to pop up out of the water like some briny monster from a Japanese movie, over near a bridge in Mystic, where a lot of old black fellows fished. They'd be sitting there, all cold and gray, all empty lines, and Kenny would appear out of the deep, brandishing a whole line of fish. "Hey, you've got to go after 'em," he'd call to the old gentlemen, and then he'd climb into his pickup and go home.

"There were a lot of happy times," Brian says. Kenny had usually worn a beard, going back to when he was in school, but now he wore only a trim mustache. It was almost debonair, and with his ebony eyes he was handsome; with his powerful physique, he was a striking figure of a man. He had a pretty girl friend, named Karen, whom he loved, and he had a good job where he'd always wanted one, working for Pfizer, the drug company, down in Groton. Around southeastern Connecticut, Pfizer is known as an especially fine employer—good people—and for three years Kenny had driven there, week after week, applying for work. He had a relative who worked there, but Kenny was determined to be hired on his own hook. And finally he was, as a chemical worker, in the spring of 1979. He and Karen celebrated. "He was happier'n a pig in slop," Phyllis says. Everybody was pretty sure that in time Kenny would marry Karen and start a family. "It sure was starting to jell for him," Brian says. "Everything was going in the right direction."

Kenny even took up boxing—with gloves—and had a couple of amateur bouts. And a semipro football club named the Sea Hawks had come to the area, so he made up his mind that even though he hadn't played in five years he'd go back to the gridiron.

At Ledyard High, Kenny had carried about 180 pounds on his 6'1" frame, but now he had filled out more, to 200 at least, maybe 225. And the extra weight was muscle. It was common for people around Ledyard to characterize him as "strong as an ox." But tough as he was, Kenny had gentle hands. He was a tight end, he could block, but he could also catch the ball so well that Mignault put in a special pass play for him.

The other receivers would stay in, as if it were going to be a running play—except for the back on Kenny's side, who

would come over the line and cut in a little, taking the defender with him. Kenny would delay a count, as though he were going to block, too, and then he would go down and out, and the quarterback would look for him over by the right sideline. The play was so successful that Mignault kept it in the Colonels' playbook even after Kenny graduated and lesser lights took his spot. In fact, the last time Kenny went to his old school for a game, he asked, "Coach, you still got my special play in?"

Ledyard High was opened in 1963. The school colors are navy blue and white, but when Mignault fielded his first varsity, in 1966, the Green Bay Packers were big, so he designed the football uniforms after Green Bay's—with blue where the Packers' green would have been, only touches of white, and heavy on the gold. The gold catches your eye much more than the blue or the white. Mignault's teams have been strong year after year. They have had only one losing season in their 15 years of football, but Kenny is still second in career passes caught and third in touchdown receptions and total yards receiving. As a senior, he was voted to the All-Eastern Connecticut Conference team. He wore big No. 86.

So he was pretty sure he could make the Sea Hawks, even after the long time away from the game. The only problem was that he had a shoulder that dislocated easily, so he decided he would have a pin inserted. He was going in for the surgery around Memorial Day of 1979, so he'd be fully recovered for the football season, but during his final checkup the doctor found some kind of boil on Kenny's left shoulder, where he was going to operate, and thought it would be unwise to cut into this infected area. There was no great rush. But that was too bad. If Kenny had had the operation, he'd have been in the hospital on June 3.

On that Sunday night, going on two years ago now, Kenny left the party early. He had to work at Pfizer the next morning, so he wanted to go home and get a good night's sleep. Friends called him names and what-not, urging him good-naturedly to stick around and have a couple more drinks, but Kenny was firm and laughed back at them, and climbed into his Ford pickup. He had a good job now.

But there was a big guy there, an acquaintance of Kenny's, and he knew Kenny liked to tussle, and so the big guy opened up the truck door and yanked Kenny out. Playfully, they scuffled, full of whiskey and youth. Then Kenny was down, trying to catch his breath, sort of half sitting up, his head bent forward some, between his legs, and the big guy took a flying leap onto him, right onto his neck.

A lot of people were laughing, and it took them a while to realize something might be wrong with Kenny. Even at the hospital, it didn't seem to be much; the skin wasn't broken; no bone was broken. All it was was a bruise. Isn't that something? All it was was a goddamned bruise. Or, officially, a cervical cord contusion, C-7. All the football, all the wrestling, the boxing, the fights, all that he'd done for his body. And then a bruise, henceforth and forever, Kenneth W. Wright would be a quadriplegic.

When he was released from the hospital he tried living with Karen at first, but, in many ways, living with her made things more difficult for him. So he moved into his mother's trailer. Mr. and Mrs. Wright had been divorced some time before. Phyllis does private duty work in a nursing home. She was more than qualified to tend to her son, but she had to quit her job to manage him properly. "I told my youngstah: I will always take care of you, but I can't help you," Phyllis says.

And, at least, Kenny was not completely wasted. There was some movement in his upper body, and he worked

with his hands so that, in a sort of gnarled manner, he could hold things and write his name. Once, he took an hour and a half to fix up a fishing rod. "I did it, I did it, Ma!" he cried. But, as we know, he was never much for that sort of sedentary stuff. He began to work out, though, building himself back up again as best he could. At his worst, his weight had gone down to 143. But soon he was as powerful across his chest and shoulders as he'd ever been. People could see it. But that was small consolation. "My youngstah always needed his legs to live his life," Phyllis says.

He told her, "Ma, I know my body. If there's one thing I know about me, it's my body. And I know I'll never walk again." Soon he began to talk about suicide.

The 1979 football season came and went. He got taken to see a couple of the Colonels' games, and once or twice he was also carted over to St. Bernard's High where the Sen Hawks played their home schedule. Some of his old friends carried him in to see the closed-circuit telecast of the first Duran-Leonard fight, too. So Kenny at least tried, the best he could, to divert himself with sports from the pain and the depression.

By now, though, a lot of his old pals had stopped coming by; they couldn't deal with this Kenny. Only a few never stopped sacrificing for him. Billy, who is employed by the maintenance department in the nearby town of Stonington, was one; Brian, who works for a plumbing-supply company, was another.

Brian is 25 now, an uncommonly good-looking young man. He has diffi-

culty talking about his old friend; after all, they were so close. They had known each other since they were nine, in Little League baseball. Brian would try to carry Kenny around. He even took it upon himself to transport Kenny down to New London for his haircuts. Or he'd come around in his truck and drive Kenny and his wheelchair out to the woods, where Brian would park and then push Kenny along the paths. In better times, they had hunted a lot of these places together. Brian was never a scuba diver but, like Kenny, he loved hunting. "The best is being out there by yourself, nobody bothering you," he says.

But possibly Kenny was happiest when someone took him fishing, because that was a thing he could do, even if he couldn't do it at all the way he used to. Buckled into his wheelchair, he could hold the rod in his twisted hands and even reel in some of the snipper blues he hooked. One time he got hold of a big fish and it yanked, and just then he had one of his muscle spasms; somehow he held on, kept on fighting, and pulled in the fish. But it embarrassed him to almost lose control. Phyllis says, "He just couldn't cope. He was an athlete."

It was hard for Phyllis and Kenny to get by, too. Pfizer's medical insurance had paid a lot of the bills, but Phyllis couldn't leave Kenny to go to work, and they had hardly enough to live on. Soon, Phyllis began to sell off his scuba equipment, item by item—his fins, his wet suit, his spear gun and so on. She used this money mostly to buy one thing: Old Grand-Dad for Kenny. *continued*



Kenny loved to go spearfishing, loved to pop suddenly up out of the water like a briny monster from a Japanese movie, startling some old fellows fishing there

In their wisdom, the doctors wouldn't prescribe any effective pain-killing drugs for Kenny, because they didn't want him to become addicted. "Fine, he'll become an alcoholic instead," Phyllis would yell into the phone at them. Three stiff shots of bourbon, cut with a little cola, and Kenny could at least get some respite from the pain.

By now, Kenny was talking about suicide a lot, and each piece of his equipment his mother sold seemed to symbolize the draining of hope. "This isn't living, this is existing," he said. The 1980 football season approached. "Don't worry, Ma," he told Phyllis. "I'll never do it here, where you'd have to find me. It'll be at the beach or in the woods. My two favorite places."

By fall the last piece of his scuba gear had been sold for Old Grand-Dad. "Summer was over, so it wouldn't be at the beach now," Phyllis says.

Brian came to pick Kenny up on the afternoon of September 27. As he took Kenny out the door of the trailer, onto the ramp that his mother had had built for him, Kenny called back to her, back to where she was pinning up some draperies. "Hey, Ma," he said. "See you later. Take care of yourself."

She started, holding the curtain tight for just an instant. Kenny was never very expressive. He wasn't "a kisser" at all. If he had kissed his mother, she would have known right away that he was going out to kill himself. What he did say—"Take care of yourself"—was the most he could manage under the circumstances. He was just as relaxed with his father, when he dropped in to pick up the sawed-off 12-gauge. "Kenny was in real good spirits," the elder Wright remembers.

They stopped for Billy King, and then Brian drove his truck along Route 214, the old Pequot Trail, Indian territory. Out of Ledyard, on the road toward Preston, they drove by the high school. It's located at the top of Spruce Hill Road, and the Pequot Trail winds half a mile below. When Kenny passed by, at the bottom of the hill, the Ledyard Colonels, in their navy blue and white and gold, were playing a game. It was a fine football Saturday, a crystal-clear afternoon, the sun reflecting off the gold helmets. And the view to the northwest from that

field, down Spruce Hill, was so glorious that not even a football game on a football Saturday had any business intruding. The whole sweep, as far as one could see, was thick and green, touched with fire colors, hiding everything below the foliage. The Pequot Trail was obscured from sight, as was the old Western Reservation—and the place about 3½ miles away where Brian pulled his truck off



the road, just before the turnoff to Preston and the Brookside Inn. Brian and Billy wheeled Kenny into the woods for what he knew would be the last time.

While they were there, under cover of the trees, the Ledyard Colonels won their football game, 20-0.

By late afternoon, Phyllis was through with the curtains, and she sat down and started to crochet. A large clock ticked loudly in the trailer, and, suddenly, she looked up and it dawned on her. Out loud she said, "Oh my God, Kenny's gone. He's never coming back."

She knew, even though he hadn't told her. That was the point: not to tell anybody. The reason for his shooting himself was that his body didn't belong to him anymore, and he was tired of troubling other people with it. But for what Brian and Billy did that day, for no more than driving Kenny out to the woods and standing their friend to a few beers—for that, under Connecticut law, they face the possibility of 10 years for

assisting in the commission of a suicide.

At about the moment when Phyllis realized what Kenny intended to do, he asked his two friends to go get some more beer. They were gone only a few minutes, half an hour at the most. When Kenny heard them drive off, he took his gnarled fingers and unbuckled his seat belt so that he could bend his torso forward and make a better target for himself. Then he aimed the 12-gauge up at his heart and pulled the trigger. It was a difficult thing to manage, physically. But then, Kenny had always been capable, physically. The last things he saw were the bright tresses of autumn and an azure sky the shade of the sea.

The athlete now rests in the Elm Grove Cemetery, on the banks of the Mystic, very near to where he used to go spearfishing. At first Phyllis went to the grave every day, but she doubted that was good for her, so now she mostly just visits on Sundays. Sometimes she says a prayer over Kenny's grave, but other times she stands there and looks down and snaps at him. "Oh why, you bugger!" Phyllis says. "Why didn't you fight longer?"

She glances up now, as the trailer, as she talks. The clock is ticking louder. "Oh why? I think if he'd been a workworm, he..."

He what?

"He'd have adjusted better," Phyllis shakes her head. "You know, I don't really get mad at Kenny when I shout at him. You see, even if there had been a miracle, if he'd somehow been able to walk with braces and crutches, I don't think Kenny would've been happy. Not my youngstah. Not the way he was."

At the head of the grave there is a small marker, set flush in the ground. Phyllis has ordered a larger, upright one. There's no hurry on its delivery, though, because the earth by the Mystic is frozen now, and the stone couldn't be set in place till the spring thaw. It will be specially engraved. In one corner of the stone there will be an outline of a football and a jersey. No. 86. In the other, there will be fins, a mask and a snorkel. Phyllis explains, "These are the things my youngstah loved the most," which is why she is having them cut in the stone, to go with Kenny's name and the dates he lived and played, 1956-1980.

END

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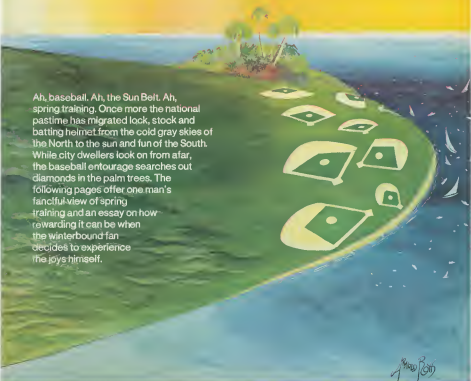
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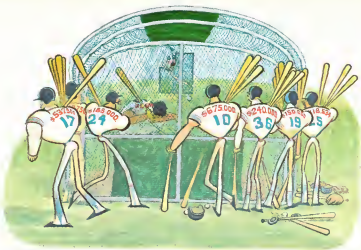
Annual Flights of Spring

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ARNOLD ROTH

Ah, baseball. Ah, the Sun Belt. Ah, spring training. Once more the national pastime has migrated lock, stock and batting helmet from the cold gray skies of the North to the sun and fun of the South. While city dwellers look on from afar, the baseball entourage searches out diamonds in the palm trees. The following pages offer one man's fanciful view of spring training and an essay on how rewarding it can be when the winterbound fan decides to experience the joys himself.

An illustration of a tropical island with a green lawn. Several baseball diamonds are drawn on the lawn, some with bases and a pitcher's mound. In the background, there are palm trees and a small hut. The island is surrounded by blue water with white sailboats. The sky is a gradient of yellow and orange, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The illustration is signed 'Arnold Roth' in the bottom right corner.

Arnold Roth



Strokes of good fortune



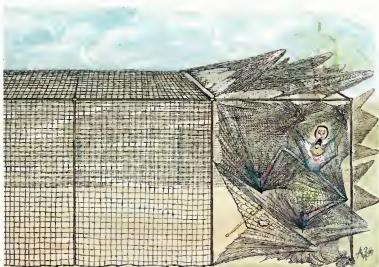
Signings of the times



Man against machine



Talking a good game





Morning at "the complex"





Nosing around the clubhouse



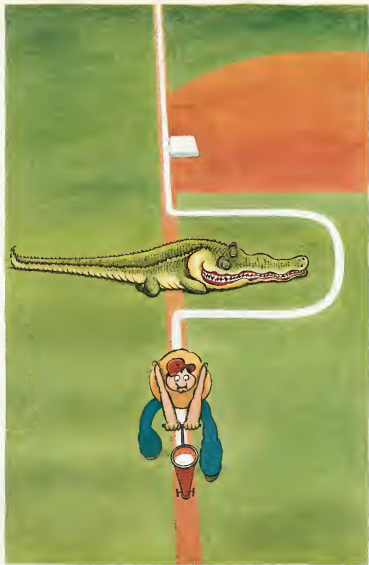
Dealing with the natives



Evaluating the prospects



Visiting a souvenir sand



usually familiar names from the past.

The fan can stand behind a batting cage in Tampa and listen to the Reds' Ted Kluszewski give pointers to Johnny Bench. Or watch the Cardinals' Hal Lanier teach the fine art of bunting in St. Petersburg. At any moment in Bradenton, the Pirates' Willie Stargell might come bounding off the field bellowing, "Anybody here want to talk baseball?"

Early in spring training the teams split up to play intrasquad games—the Menkes vs. the Williamses, for example,

on the St. Pete beach. Rooms at less lavish Gulf-front digs can be found starting at \$40 a night. Condominiums start at \$1,300 for the month.

The St. Pete area has some truly fine restaurants—and more truly awful ones. Some of the best: Bern's Steak House, the Flame and the Columbia in Tampa—all favorites of the Reds; Heilman's Beachcomber and The Island House in Clearwater Beach—Phillie hangouts; Peter's Place and Le Pompano in the St. Pete area, for those with more continental tastes. An inexpensive favorite in St. Pete is Ted Peter's Famous Smoked Fish where you can dine outdoors on picnic tables and enjoy smoked-mullet spread (\$1.90) and cold beer (75¢). Some of the best—and biggest—prime ribs you'll ever see are served at the Derby Lane greyhound track in St. Pete. (Yes, they do have doggy bags and you'll certainly need one—as well as a reservation several days in advance.) The dog track—and Tampa Bay Downs racetrack—are favorite haunts of Pete Rose and other stars. But resist the temptation to ask for autographs. The players are there for a good time, too.

If you plan your itinerary well, a tour of the camps can also include local celebrations and attractions. Some of the best are Walt Disney World near the Twins' headquarters in Orlando; Busch Gardens; The Dark Continent near the Reds in Tampa; the Plant City Strawberry Festival (Feb. 27 to March 7) near the Tigers in Lakeland. Payne Park in Sarasota is a festival of its own—a fair-grounds atmosphere in which White Sox players must mingle with fans just to get to the field. Sarasota's also the home of the Ringling Museums and the Circus Hall of Fame. Beware of Al Lang Stadium in St. Pete. The 4-year-old home of the Cardinals and Mets is a prime example of how not to build a ball park. The seats are situated so that most fans are unshaded and stare into the sun. The steps are too steep and there are few railings to help the elderly. But St. Pete does host Old Timers' Day—March 7 this year—which is always worth a few good memories and a few good laughs. And that's what spring training's all about.

—KATHLEEN ANDRIA

Thrills at Every Turn

And so, once more, they go—baseball players and camp followers—into the sun for six weeks of make-believe. The beleaguered fans, meanwhile, are left behind to cope with fuel bills and read stories in the morning paper about the boys of summer performing the rites of spring. But why must the fans, why must you, only read about the glories of spring training? This might be the year to turn down the thermostat, pile the family into the car and head south to see baseball the way it's meant to be played—on real grass, in sunshine and at its own pace.

The main revelation of spring training is that players are people with faces and voices. They smile, chat, frolic and gladly sign autographs. This is especially true during the first three weeks, when most of the teams work out daily at "the complex"—an array of diamonds, open greenward, batting cages and pitching mounds. From about 10 a.m. until 1 p.m., players engage in calisthenics, running and endless drills. An infielder may take as many as 100 ground balls, a batter several buckets of balls from a pitching machine. Pickoffs, cutoffs, run-downs—any situation that is likely to come up during a game—are practiced over and over under the direction of coaches and special instructors who are

at the Blue Jay complex in Dunedin. On March 7 the exhibition games begin, often between teams in different leagues. The contests usually start at 1 p.m. in the Cactus League (Arizona) and 1:30 in the Grapefruit League (Florida). Tickets are generally available (price range \$1 to \$5), but it's wise to call ahead in the case of a traditional rivalry—or when the Yankees are coming to town. Also, if you want to see a specific player, ask if he's scheduled to play. Not every player makes every road trip.

The Angels train in Palm Springs, Calif.; the Cubs, Padres, Giants, Indians, A's, Brewers and Mariners in Arizona; and the Braves, Astros, Dodgers, Expos, Yankees, Orioles and Rangers on the east coast of Florida. But unless you have an unflinching allegiance to one of those teams, the best place to see spring training is on Florida's west coast, where you can easily visit the spring headquarters of seven teams and, with a bit of effort, four others. An example of the headquarters: Fort Myers, the home of the Royals, is a laborious four-hour trip from St. Petersburg down Franchise Alley, a/k/a/ the Tamiami Trail.

There are thousands of places to stay—from cheaper inland motels (\$35-50) to the \$65-and-up-a-night rooms in the historic pink palace, the Don CeSar,



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For J.D. Barnett the solution to a problem, any problem, is willpower. You have the self-discipline to prepare and prepare and prepare, and if that's not enough, you beat the damned thing over the head until it's straightened out. That's why he yells and screams and browbeats his players, and that's why his Virginia Commonwealth Rams were 23-4 and headed for the NCAA tournament for the second consecutive year following a 62-61 overtime win against Alabama-Birmingham in the championship game of the Sun Belt Conference tournament last Sunday in Jacksonville, Fla.

When it came down to it, the Rams were probably too scared of their coach to lose. "I wasn't going to let them, not when we've come this far," said Barnett.

"Intense? I've heard people say that about me but ... ah. Yeah, I'm intense. That's the way I am and I can't do anything about it now," he added. "My life, my way of making a living is all wrapped up in 25 or so 40-minute ball games. Imagine if your living depended on 40 minutes, 25 times a year. Wouldn't you be intense?"

There's at least one more 40 minute session on the horizon for Barnett—in the NCAA tournament, where he hopes to do better than last year's first-round 86-72 loss to Iowa. How the Rams fare will reflect upon the Sun Belt, which, contrary to outsiders' opinions, isn't a league of senior citizens but, as they say in the Southeast, "a conference on the come."

In the five years since its inception, the seven-team Sun Belt has come a long way. Last year it was one of only five conferences to have at least two teams in both the NCAA and NIT tournaments and two players taken in the first round of the pro draft. The Sun Belt is already on a par with the likes of the Metro Conference and the Big East. According to the NCAA's computers, the league is the ninth toughest in the country. The



Barnett's players were too scared of him to lose

Conference on the come

Of the upwardly mobile Sun Belt teams, Virginia Commonwealth is rising fastest



Birmingham's Bartow lost in the finals once more

top three teams—Alabama-Birmingham, Virginia Commonwealth and South Alabama—already can compete with anyone, witness South Alabama's 76-67 defeat of Ohio State at Columbus early this season.

Though Sun Belt charter member Georgia State withdrew from the conference after a first-round loss in this year's tournament—things had gotten too big-time for the Panthers—there's already talk of expansion to eight teams, with names like Miami, Old Dominion and South Carolina being tossed about. Any of them would add prestige.

As would landing a major high school prospect, one that was being recruited by, say, an ACC or Big Ten school. That may happen soon. Ennis Whatley of Phillips High in Birmingham, deemed by many the finest schoolboy point guard in the nation, has verbally committed himself to Alabama-Birmingham. If Whatley stays home, the conference may truly be on its way. "I know we're getting there," says Vic Bubas, the former Duke coach and now the Sun Belt commissioner. How does Bubas know? "Because when my coaching friends and I sit around in bars or someplace talking basketball, pretty soon one of them will blurt out, 'I'm damned if we're going to play anyone from your league.'"

More sobering for the competition is the shot of credibility that coaches like Gene Bartow of Alabama-Birmingham, Tates Locke of Jacksonville and Lee Rose of South Florida have given the conference. These guys can win, as can the conference's young lions, like Cliff Ellis, 35, of South Alabama and, of course, the 37-year-old Barnett.

When Barnett left the head coaching job at Louisiana Tech in 1979—"I couldn't stand it," he says. "The women would draw 5,000 and we'd get 500. They had a bigger staff and more money to spend than we did"—and moved to Virginia Commonwealth, one of the first

things he did was install a movie projector and screen in his bedroom.

"In the middle of the night that thing is going back and forth, back and forth," says his wife, Susan. "We have two children, one four months. When I get up to feed her, I come back to the bedroom and it's going again."

With that sort of dedication, Barnett may soon be given the esteem Bartow and Rose already enjoy. The only active coaches to have taken two different teams into the final four—the University of North Carolina-Charlotte, another Sun Belt team, and Purdue for Rose; Memphis State and UCLA for Bartow—they have won a combined 69.3% of their games over the years. This season Rose guided South Florida, a 6-21 doormat in '79-80, to an 18-10 record and a possible NIT bid. Miraculous? Not really. It was only the second season in Rose's 14-year career at four schools that he has failed to win 20 games. "You can either sustain programs or create them," he says. "I think there's something special about the creative process. Tampa has never been a hotbed of basketball, there was no great tradition, no support. But the potential was there."

Bartow's project at 12-year-old UAB has been even more ambitious—building a team from scratch, which he got plenty of four years ago to move to Birmingham from UCLA. "We have an administration that really wants to be known as the University of Alabama and get rid of the hyphen," Bartow says. "They want to be recognized like a USC in football or a UCLA in basketball."

At Alabama-Birmingham, as distinct from UCLA, Bartow isn't coaching the team you love to hate. Locally, that title belongs to his neighbor to the south, South Alabama. A loose group, the South Alabama players love to jive and high-five, usually in their opponents' faces. They're always messing with the opposition's heads, talking from the opening tip and getting louder with each good play they make.

Two seasons ago, in Jacksonville, the Jaguars were pelted with socks, some of which were stuffed with ice or golf balls, as they were introduced before the game and again after the action had started. Things got to the point where Locke had to get on the P.A. system to restore order.

"We got that stuff because we win. When I was a freshman we were the

doormats, but then we went undefeated in the conference the next year and that rap began," says South Alabama's Ed Rains, a smooth forward and this season's Sun Belt Player of the Year. "It's just propaganda, just like our talking to other players. There's nothing illegal or vulgar about it. If you can mentally disturb a guy, it's to your advantage, and if he can't handle it, he shouldn't be out there."

Despite having the best talent and biggest mouths in the conference, South Alabama has never won the postseason tournament. Last week the Jaguars, who finished the regular season at 22-4 and were rated as high as 14th in the SI Top 20, were knocked off 86-59 in the semifinals by Alabama-Birmingham. That put UAB in Sunday's final against Virginia Commonwealth, which had beaten South Florida 53-45 in the other semi. The matchup was a repeat of last year's final, won 105-88, by Virginia Commonwealth, and provided a stark contrast between the gentlemanly, bespectacled Bartow and Barnett, a first-class ranter and naver.

Although the two men grew up in the same county in Missouri, they aren't the best of friends. After blowing an early lead and losing 67-65 to the Blazers in Birmingham on Jan. 10, Barnett put his fist through a locker room blackboard. Bartow sent him a \$265 bill for the damages.

Barnett's tone for the tournament was set two minutes into the Rams' first practice session after they arrived in Jacksonville, when he stopped the action to remind his squad why they had made the trip to Jacksonville. "If you're here to screw around, your ass is grass," roared Barnett. "We're not here to play, we're here to WIN!"

And when all the shouting was over they had, although with the game on the line Barnett was surprisingly the quietest person in the arena. The clincher came on a free throw by the Rams' outstanding point guard, Edmund Sherod, following a questionable two-shot foul call with four seconds to play, and as Sherod went to the line, Barnett seemed to bow his head in prayer. It drooped lower when Sherod missed his first shot. But after the game-winner had rattled home, Barnett was talking loud and tough again. "I want to make it clear. We are the best team in this conference," he said. "We're 23-4 with 15 wins in a row. Someone is going to damn sure realize that VCU exists."

THE WEEK

(Feb. 27-March 3)
by HERM WEISKOPE

MIDEAST For the second Sunday in a row, the nation's longest winning streak ended. Following in the footsteps of Virginia, which had its 28-game string broken the previous week, Louisiana State fell 73-71 at Kentucky after having won 26 straight. The Tigers, bottled up by the Wildcats after inbounding the ball from under the basket with 10 seconds left, couldn't work the ball inside, and a last desperate outside shot fell short. Guard Dick Minnifield directed the Kentucky offense, scored 11 points and had 10 assists. Both teams won earlier SEC games, the Tigers beating Mississippi 74-67 and the Cats prevailing 78-74 at Mississippi State.

Georgia defensed visiting Tennessee, clinching a 76-75 overtime win when Terry Fair dunked after taking a pass from Dominique Wilkins. The Bulldogs, trailing 37-24 in the first half, got superb performances from Fair, who had 18 points, 12 rebounds and five assists, and Wilkins, with 24 points, nine rebounds and four blocked shots. Then, while Georgia was being surprised by Mississippi 64-62, Tennessee beat Auburn 75-63.

"Emotion shows in the way your team goes after loose balls and rebounds, and tonight we played without emotion, without intensity. That will not stand." Those were the stern words of Iowa Coach Lute Olson after the Hawkeyes were outrebounded 31-28 during a narrow 69-66 win over Michigan. Two days later the chastised Hawkeyes outscored Wisconsin 50-33—and won 96-75.

Indiana remained one game in back of Iowa in the Big Ten by sweeping past Ohio State, 74-58, and Michigan, 98-83. Guard Jash Thomas kept the Hoosiers sailing along in those games with 53 points, 13 assists, 11 rebounds and eight steals. Minnesota was a spoiler for the third week in succession, knocking Illinois out of a tie for second place. Trent Tucker and Randy Breuer got 43 points for the Gophers, who held the Illini to seven points in one 15½-minute stretch en route to a 76-59 victory. Illinois then won at Purdue for the first time in 18 years as freshman Derek Harper had a school-record 12 assists and Eddie Johnson and Perry Range split 46 points evenly during an 81-70 triumph.

"I've never seen this team so loose, but we are playing with intensity," said DePaul Coach Ray Meyer, who felt his players had finally attained the proper perspective. The Blue Demons kept Meyer happy by drubbing Butler 89-64, and then they zipped to a 22-point halftime lead against Loyola of Chicago, got 31 points from Mark Aguirre, 22 from Terry Cummings and breezed 105-95.

continued

One thing seemed certain at the start of the final week of Mid-American play: the four-team logjam at the top of the standings would be broken. No way. When the last shot had been taken, first place was shared by five teams: Toledo, Bowling Green, Ball State and Western Michigan stayed in first after each picked up a win and a loss. Joining them was Northern Illinois, which beat Eastern Michigan 74-57 and Western Michigan 65-63.

Notre Dame beat St. Francis (Pa.) 87-81 and, with Tracy Jackson, Orlando Woolridge and Kelly Tripucka combining for 58 points, defeated Dayton 70-57.

MIDWEST The less pressure that Guard Jerry Eaves has felt, the tenser things have gotten for Louisville's opponents. Eaves, whose play suffered early in the season because he was paired in the backcourt with 6' 9" Scooter McCray, has regained his touch since Jan. 5, when freshman Lancaster Gordon became his running mate. Gordon, a true guard at 6' 3", scored 17 points and Eaves 21 during an 81-67 victory over Cincinnati. What's more, with freshman Charles Jones having bumped Wiley Brown out of his starting role at center in recent weeks, the Cardinals have played better defense. Then Louisville ran its winning streak to 13 games by knocking off St. Louis 97-85 and Western Kentucky 90-75.

Why would Southern Methodist go into a stall while trailing 28-15 at Arkansas? Well, it was Mustang Coach Dave Bliss' way of avoiding another runaway by the Razorbacks, who in January had dealt SMU its worst loss ever, 92-50. When the latest matchup ended, Arkansas had its own bliss—a 47-33 win and its fourth Southwest Conference championship or co-championship in five years.

Two other teams were more successful than SMU in return matches. Missouri, a 19-point loser to Kansas State in early February, used a slowdown to get a 46-43 triumph over the Wildcats. After holding the ball for 7:22, the Tigers thrived things out with 22 seconds to go and the score 43-43. Rocky Frazier came through with a three-point play in the last seven seconds to give Mizzou the win and the Big Eight title. Indiana State also turned things around, averaging a 93-59 loss to Wichita State by shocking the Shockers 75-72 in a Missouri Valley game (page 20).

EAST Wake Forest overcame Virginia's 16-point halftime lead because it was able, as Coach Carl Tacy put it, to "up-tempo the game, get in our rhythm and do a better job on Sampson." Indeed, the Deacons did speed things up, held Ralph Sampson to one basket in the second half and hand the Cavaliers their second loss in a row, 73-66 in overtime.

Two other ACC upsets were by 66-65 scores. One upset was Wake Forest, which trailed by 22 early in the second half at North

SI TOP 20

1. OREGON STATE (25-0) 1*
2. DEPAUL (25-1) 3
3. LOUISIANA ST. (27-2) 4
4. VIRGINIA (24-2) 2
5. ARIZONA ST. (22-3) 5
6. KENTUCKY (22-4) 6
7. NOTRE DAME (22-4) 9
8. IOWA (21-4) 12
9. UTAH (24-3) 7
10. N. CAROLINA (22-7) 8
11. WAKE FOREST (21-6) 10
12. UCLA (18-6) 13
13. TENNESSEE (20-6) 11
14. INDIANA (19-9) 17
15. BYU (21-6) 14
16. ILLINOIS (19-6) 15
17. ARKANSAS (22-6) 18
18. LOUISVILLE (19-8) 20
19. WYOMING (21-5) --
20. WICHITA ST. (21-5) 18

* Last week

Carolina State. After cutting the deficit to one point, the Deacons spent most of the last minute working for the one shot they hoped would be a game-winner. That attempt fell short, and the Wolfpack, despite getting only one field goal in the final 11:39, hung on. North Carolina's James Worthy, who hurt his back during a 76-51 romp over Georgia Tech, sat out an overtime loss at Duke. Gene Banks of the Blue Devils, who scored 20 of his 25 points after the intermission, swished in a shot in the last second of regulation time and scored six points in the extra period. Virginia returned to form with a 74-63 triumph over Maryland in which Sampson had 17 points, 11 rebounds and nine blocked shots.

After being beaten 90-86 at Syracuse, Boston College clinched the Big East title with a 64-57 win over Seton Hall. St. John's ended a four-game losing streak, its longest in 18 years, by defeating Syracuse 82-73.

In the finale of the Big Five season in Philadelphia, St. Joseph's was unable to get its last break going and lost to Villanova 72-62. Thus for the first time in the informal league's 26 years, the competition ended in a five-way tie. One of those five—Penn.—was involved in another deadlock. The Quakers' 52-43 triumph over Princeton left those two tied for first in the Ivy League.

American University locked up the East Coast Conference's Eastern championship by beating St. Joseph's 84-83 in overtime and knocking off Temple 70-62. Mark Nickens, who took over at forward when Bob Bowers, the Eagles' all-time top scorer was sidelined with a knee injury in mid-January, poured in 27 of his 33 points against the Hawks after halftime. Even with Bowers out for the last 16

games, American has won 14 times and run its record to 22-4.

Rhode Island has also done well despite adversity. Coach Jack Kraft having suffered a heart attack after the season opener. Since then, almost all the coaching duties have been handled by Kraft's associate, Claude English. The Rams' 20-6 record and Eastern Eight title presents a novel problem for those who think Rhode has New England's coach of the year. Do they cast their ballots for Kraft, the coach of record? Or do they vote for English, who officially is 0-0?

WEST Wyoming clinched its first 20-win season since 1952 with WAC victories over visiting Brigham Young and Utah. BYU was beaten 86-84 in double overtime by the deft shooting of Charles Bradley and Mike Jackson. Bradley had 31 points and Jackson, who forced a second extra period by sinking two late free throws, sank the basket that finally put the Cowboys in front for keeps. Kenneth Olke was Wyoming's big gun against Utah, contributing a three-point play that knotted the score at 46-all, sinking two foul shots with 36 seconds left and wind-

PLAYER OF THE WEEK

ZAMBOLIST (Zam) FREDRICK: The 6' 2" guard, with an 8.1 average over three years, had 43 points as South Carolina beat Georgia Southern 106-69, raising his average for this season to 28.9, the best in the nation.

ing up with 19 points during the 53-50 upset. Thus, Wyoming pulled to within one game of the first-place Utes.

Oregon State players call broad-beamed 6' 10½" Steve Johnson Big Behind. No question when the Beavers fall behind it's Johnson whom they rely on to rear up and can the big shots. Johnson lived up to his reputation at Southern Cal; he overcame a 55-52 deficit with 15 points in the last 8:49 as he finished with 33 and the Beavers with a 73-64 win. During an 89-63 romp over Washington, Johnson scored 24 points. And Johnson had 26 more on Sunday as Oregon State stopped UCLA 82-76. There were two upbeat notes for the Beavers: they routed Oregon 98-75, and Center Kenny Fields was allowed to return to the squad. Coach Larry Brown, who suspended Fields nine days earlier for unspecified reasons, sought to explain matters by saying, "I overreacted."

With Gaared Byron Scott sinking 13 of 17 shots, scoring 28 points and adding eight assists, seven rebounds and five steals, Arizona State counted past California 81-68.

By knocking off San Jose State 62-52 and Utah State 82-58, Fresno State clinched the PCAA title, finished the regular season 23-3 and wound up with the stingiest defense in the land, 50.4 points a game.



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**IT HELPS TO KNOW
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There was a time long ago when the object of the Southern Ocean Racing Conference was simple: It was an excuse for salty chums to gather and try to win trophies and drink each other under the table. Today the quest is more complex. The six-race series is now the proving ground on which boats rating between 30 and 39.9 feet try for berths on the U.S. team that will compete in Great Britain's Admiral's Cup series in August. It's also the place where skippers of craft great and small especially love to beat Dennis Conner, the hyperserious supersailor from San Diego who has won fleet honors in three of the last six SORCs.

At the end of the series last week the men of *Louisiana Crude*, a rated 32.6-footer out of New Orleans, hadn't won a single race, but in the process of cul-

ivating cirrhosis of the liver they did win the overall fleet title and selection to the Admiral's Cup team—and they beat Conner to boot. But because of serious illnesses in their families, Dick Jennings of Chicago and Tom Dreyfus of New Orleans, co-owners of *Louisiana Crude*, declined the Admiral's Cup berth and sold their boat, a setback softened for Dreyfus, who reckoned it was better to have crewed on *Crude* and beaten Conner than never to have sailed at all.

A year ago, when Conner was busy with his near-perfect America's Cup effort and sailed in only one SORC race,

This year's SORC winners are the guys from the Crude, whose antics are rude

he told Dreyfus that *Acadia*, the Louisiana boat on which Dreyfus then served, wouldn't win. As Dreyfus recalls, "In the St. Petersburg Yacht Club, I bet Conner a hundred dollars that *Acadia* would win. Just before I almost punched him, he said that I played too much and used having fun as an excuse for losing. He said I was a loser and would always be a loser. Right there at the bar we had to be separated. I was very upset."

Acadia did win the SORC last year, a somewhat hollow victory because Conner was only a part-time participant, but like elephants, Dreyfus and the other fan-loving Cajuns remembered and found this year's results cause for solid celebration. Conner skipped *Williwaw*, the seventh boat of that name owned by Seymour Sinett of Perth Amboy, N.J., to third in fleet—behind *Louisiana Crude* and a new, smaller *Acadia*.

While it's doubtful that the men of *Louisiana Crude* did any more carousing than many of their rivals, their reputation for living it up has won their boat several nicknames, notably the Animal House and the Shaved Tiger. For that, Dreyfus was largely, but not wholly, to blame. In the SORC series of '78, '79 and '80, Dreyfus served as able seaman, watch captain and antic pacesetter aboard the first two *Acadias* owned by his fellow Louisianian, Burt Keenan.

In the 1978 St. Petersburg-Fort Lauderdale race, when Ted Turner at the helm of his ancient ship *Tenacious* began closing on the first, 51-foot *Acadia*, Dreyfus shouted, "Do not pass us or we'll shoot." As Turner proceeded onward, Dreyfus fired twice with a .38 revolver, once over the stern of *Tenacious*, once across her bow.

Two years ago, when the plane taking Dreyfus from New Orleans to Miami was diverted to Orlando to unload a berserk passenger, *Acadia* had to leave the dock for the starting line of the Ocean Triangle race without him. So as not to miss the race, 10 minutes before the starting gun Dreyfus leapt 40 feet from a helicopter into the water beside *Acadia*. After winning last year's SORC, the crew of Keenan's second, 42-foot *Acadia* got

continued

Animal House goes to sea



Louisiana Crude owner Dreyfus and helmsman Blackaller make a stab at looking happy but humble.

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What science tells us about stress and vitamins.

Stress is your body's reaction to any physical condition that places an unusual demand on it. When it upsets your nutritional balance, stress—whether due to physical overwork, fad dieting, alcohol, a severe infection or injury—may cause a vitamin depletion.

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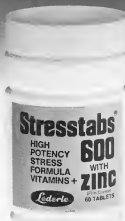
Supplementation of the water-soluble vitamins during stress is a well-accepted practice among the medical

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into an intersquad tiff with Turner's men that resulted in a big food fight in Big Al's place in Nassau. Dreyfus recalls, "We threw glasses, plates and carafes full of wine. For no good reason. Really foolish. It cost me \$300."

Considering past events, the Animal House label hung on *Louisiana Crude* wasn't truly deserved. The crews of both *Crude* and Keenan's third *Acadia*, a 40-footer, were relatively sedate, assailing their rivals only verbally. Not a plate was thrown in anger. Not a shot was fired in fun. Such was their decorum that midway through the circuit, as the two local boats vied for first place, the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* headlined one story, LOUISIANA SAILORS CLEAN UP THEIR ACT FOR THE SORC SERIES.

The Louisianians' antics, albeit refreshing in a staid sport that so often seems to be suffering from the first rigors of death, do not a winner make. In fact, to judge by the records of the past five years, crew behavior, good or bad, has little to do with the outcome of the SORC. The prime requisite for winning, it seems, is a brand-new boat. Ninety boats raced on the circuit this year, and only one of the first 20 in the final point standings was more than a year old. Although *Louisiana Crude* proved to be in a class by herself, beating second-place *Acadia* by 37.5 points and *Willow* by 46.0, in rating and configuration she was a boat very much in the middle. Forty-four of her 89 rivals rated higher than she, and 45 were lower. As Jennings points out, "Big boats win races and small boats win series, but medium-sized boats win the series."

Crude is a new boat—yet old. Although she is officially the first boat named *Louisiana Crude* to take part in the circuit, actually she is the second. In configuration she is identical to the 42-foot *Acadia* that won the circuit last year. Under the blue paint and lettering on the transom of that *Acadia*, there is written *Louisiana Crude*. Dreyfus had planned to race under that name last year in the ninth hull out of the mold in his own boat works, New Orleans Marine, but when Keenan wanted a smaller racer to replace his 51-foot *Acadia*, Dreyfus sold him the prospective *Louisiana Crude*. Any sailor with 180,000 loose dollars can obtain a reasonable stock facsimile of *Acadia* and *Crude* from Serendipity Yachts, which gets its molded hulls



In the Nassau Cup, last race of the series, Crude finished fourth, good enough for the SORC title.

from Dreyfus. For about another \$25,000 the buyer can get the special stiffening of carbon fiber layed up in the boat's deck and Kevlar in her hull, as well as modest reshaping of the lines that save about two-tenths of a foot of rating.

Back in the mid-'60s a stock design called the Cal 40 twice won the SORC because it was something of a breakthrough. The most unusual thing about the *Acadia* and *Crude* configuration that has now won twice is that it isn't very unusual. It's a production design conceived three years ago by the San Diego architect, Doug Peterson, as a cruising racer, a middle-of-the-roader that is equally good in a range of weather and on all points of sailing. Although he is better known as a Star boat and six-meter champion, Tom Blackaller, the middle-aged laughing boy from California who was principal helmsman on *Crude*, has had a good deal of ocean-racing experience on world-beaters as well as on shagbuds. In explaining the success of *Crude*, Blackaller says, "When they get their kind of conditions, specialized boats win races, but when they don't, they are apt to lose big. A boat like *Crude* can win the series without winning a race." Says Dreyfus, "*Crude* is plain, straight vanilla. A simple boat sailed by simple people."

How did *Louisiana Crude* get the nickname Shaved Tiger that's now used with affection by the members of the crew? Dreyfus isn't a braggart, but he does exclude a lot of optimism—sometimes pre-

maturely. For example, though after two races *Willow* with Conner, the flawless beast, was only 5.5 points behind *Crude* and selection for the Admiral's Cup team was still a battle among two dozen boats, Dreyfus proclaimed for all to hear, "I'm practicing how to curtsy to the Queen." After a day and night of rough-and-tumble sailing on the long St. Pete-Lauderdale race that counts 2.5 points per place, Dreyfus came on deck feeling particularly exuberant as the boat ripped along under spinnaker. Although he had no idea how *Crude* was doing compared to her rivals, Dreyfus tapped his reserve of optimism and said to navigator John Rumsey, "My God, isn't this great! Here we have a production boat, Number 18 out of the mold, and we're beating all those \$300,000 custom boats."

"This isn't a production boat," Rumsey replied. "It's a shaved tiger."

"What in hell is a shaved tiger?" Dreyfus asked.

"The Mexicans take a tiger," Rumsey said, "and shave it so that it looks like a dog. Then they enter it in a dog show and it eats all the other dogs."

Although luck will always play a part in ocean racing, the technological advances of each passing year make the competition among the best-prepared boats more and more equal. The chance that a gambling skipper will win the SORC by taking a flier is decreasing. The honors usually go to the crew that has the best shaved tiger under its feet. **END**



PART II: MOUNTAIN OF THE MISTS

SITTING

A photograph of three mountaineers sitting on a rocky, snow-covered mountain peak. The climber on the left wears a blue helmet and a tan jacket. The climber in the middle wears a red helmet and a tan jacket, with one arm raised. The climber on the right wears a red helmet and a dark jacket. In the background, another climber is visible on a distant peak under a cloudy sky.

ON TOP OF THE WORLD

Overcoming exhaustion, cold and a near fall, Sam, Geoff and Bob reach the summit. Then they begin an unscolding return to "civilization" by **SAM MOSES**

CONTINUED

CARSTENZ PYRAMID

continued

On the fourth day of our jungle trek from the New Guinea village of Ilaqa to the mysterious, mist-shrouded Carstensz Pyramid, whose 16,023-foot peak we intended to climb, Bob Shapiro, Geoff Tabin and I took stock of our situation. We were three Americans in a distant, primitive corner of the world. We had had our passports confiscated by the *chamat*, Ilaqa's Indonesian military chief. Too impatient to deal with the bureaucratic maze that stood between us and the required "walking papers," we had gone to Ilaqa without them, been caught out by the *chamat* and barely allowed to depart for the mountain.

And now, more than 12,000 feet above sea level in the chill, wet jungle fastness, all of us, including our 16 Western Dani porters, were feeling the effects of the altitude.

Bob was recovering from the flu. Although his strength hadn't fully returned, he was happy to feel as good as he did. Geoff was still blithely and easily strolling into and over whatever came next. We all had been breathless the day we landed in Ilaqa, at 8,038 feet, and as we trekked higher the air became thinner. On the second day our thirst had become unquenchable, and on the third,

blood pounded in our temples as we walked. Now, on the fourth day, I was dizzy most of the time.

The porters were beginning to complain of vague afflictions that could only have been altitude illness. Our chief porter, Aner, would groan lightly and wave vaguely at his solar plexus in response to any queries about his health. The Dani believe the solar plexus contains spiritual matter called *tau-eken*, or "seeds of singing." Whether an ailment is of the body or soul, a stomachache or a sad heart, they believe the seeds of singing have somehow been upset, probably by ghosts.

I vomited the day before, and again this afternoon. I was pale and gaunt, and couldn't concentrate beyond the next step. When I admitted to Bob that the dizziness was unrelenting, he soberly warned me against walking myself into pulmonary edema, and the thought of having to turn back alarmed me. I decided that not only would I not vomit again, but that also I would lie about my condition if the subject came up. Fortunately, the nausea got no worse and as I became acclimatized, it eventually diminished.

I also decided to stop straggling behind Bob and Geoff. But keeping up with them turned out to be impossible. It frustrated me. After all, I was the one who had trained specifically for the trek. Bob and Geoff had been preoccupied with final exams at Oxford and hadn't had time for even the most basic exercise. It seemed a weak argument for me, at 33,

to plead the ravages of age, but Bob was 25 and Geoff 24, and that was nearly a decade's difference, I told myself. They say you feel age in your legs first, and my legs were spent. Geoff, the natural athlete, had lost weight, maybe 10 pounds, and he was actually getting fatter, using the trek to condition himself for the climb. Bob's legs seemed to be getting longer and longer; once I peered up at him as he stood on the top of a hill in his size-11 boots, and he looked like a lean giant.

Bob kept a steady, strong pace. Geoff and I trekked with less consistency, Geoff's pace punctuated by irrepressible bursts of enthusiasm and mine by lapses of enthusiasm, just as irrepressible. The problem, I thought, was not so much my legs as my spirit. My seeds of singing were upset.

On this gloomiest of days Bob declared that even if we should never reach Carstensz Pyramid, the trek would be enough for him and he would go home satisfied. I couldn't understand that, yet I thought I envied it. Bob and Geoff were on their "strenuous holiday," and were open to the experience. All I wanted to do was climb the goddamn mountain. For six weeks I had been reaching for the top of Carstensz Pyramid, and anything that stood between me and the summit—including the trek—no matter how exotic it was and how privileged I was to be there, was an annoyance. It wasn't a good mix: Geoff was game, Bob was appreciative and I was irritated. I had been

As base camp the climbers find signs of the nearby American mine: graffiti, garbage and oil drums. Sam leads a traverse from the east on the first attempt as the



Geoff searches for a firm handhold on an overhang on the north face, while Sam belays below.

trained how to climb a mountain, but enjoying the experience was something I would have to figure out for myself.

The *chamat* had told us it would take four days to reach Carstensz Pyramid, but four days had passed and we were nowhere near it. We thought Aner had also told us four days, but he couldn't have; the Dani's sense of time is vague, and they have no word for any number greater than three. We probably had asked Aner if it was four days to Carstensz Pyramid, and he had nodded, but he would have nodded if we had said 40 days. When I straggled into camp, last by nearly half an hour, I wanted to grab Aner by the shoulders and say, "But you told us four days! Promise me we'll be there tomorrow!" But no doubt that would only have elicited a meaningless nod of assurance.

We had spent the day trekking across the Zenglliong Plateau. On our map the plateau was dark green and covered with amoeba-shaped spots labeled NUMEROUS SINKHOLES. I loved the expression, felt it could be an epitaph. We slogged across this 13,000-foot-high savanna, dodging Numerous Sinkholes hidden by thigh-high grass and patiently waiting to suck our legs off at the knees.

The Sinkholes were concentrated in the Basins of Ijomba, named by a previous climber for his favorite *continued*

not, but they lose their way and drift into back



CARSTENSZ PYRAMID

continued

porter. Our porters yelped and yipped as we slurped through the bog. Bob appeared beside me, his hands behind his back and his head down, like a man peeing the floor. "Fairly severe marshland," he said as I tugged at my thigh to unstuck a foot. The bog ended at the foot of a huge hill, which had numerous sinkholes oozing down its side. It was the steepest, longest, slimiest hill of a trek replete with steep, long, slimy hills. The drill on this hill was two steps up, slide back one; two up, back one, for 20 feet, then rest. It went like this for hundreds of feet. A succession of ridges each appeared to be the summit, but they invariably and dishearteningly revealed nothing but more hill beyond. A cold gray drizzle was falling. My legs were at their weakest and my enthusiasm its lowest. I stopped to pant and curse a while. Bob came along again, moving steadily up the hill. "Fairly definitive mud," he said. Geoff was stripped to his swim trunks beneath his raincoat and was wearing sneakers, his galoshes having been sucked off by sinkholes. I think he was whistling. "Hmm, pretty slick little trail here," he said cheerfully as he moved on. I wanted to kill him.

We were still in our sleeping bags the next morning when we heard the call of the mountain quail, one of the few suggestions of animal life, other than tropical birds and tree-climbing rats, that we encountered. Then we heard Aner's voice, sounding as if he were scolding someone. I lifted a corner of the tent flap and saw him standing on a hill sur-

rounded by the porters, who were squatting or kneeling. He was speaking firmly and rhythmically, and as he continued, his voice gathered speed and urgency. Soon he was almost shouting, and he glanced toward the sky as if he wanted to shake his fist at it. Aner was praying, when God replaced the ghosts as an object of worship, the new belief apparently inherited some of the Dani irreverence toward spirits.

We didn't make it to Carstensz Pyramid on the fifth day, either. But we were camping in the shadow of the Noordwand, the four-mile-long, 1,500-foot-high ridge of peaks that had repulsed the New Zealand expedition of 1961. We pitched our tent next to a glacial lake, the porters camping 100 yards away under a rock shelter whose walls were blackened from the smoke of fires past. Half a mile away stood the north wall of Ngga Pulu, 15,947 feet, the peak at the east end of the Noordwand; its face was broad and sheer, with icefalls cascading like canyons hundreds of feet down.

We were awakened the next morning by what sounded like barking. It was the porters; often they greeted their days with a sharp *woof* that sounded like a dog barking in the distance. That day Aner led us straight over the Noordwand through the 14,764-foot New Zealand Pass, the only part of the ridge not fringed by ice. We scrambled up over sharp rocks and through patches of snow. Still barefoot and mostly naked, the porters climbed toward the pass, using one hand

on the rocks and the other to steady the heavy packs on their shoulders.

When we topped the pass, an icy wind slapped us in the face; at that moment Carstensz Pyramid came into view for the first time. My spirits instantly shot sky-high; I felt like shouting. We looked out across two steep-walled valleys, each about a thousand feet deep and together less than a mile wide—the Meren Valley and the Yellow Valley. They were divided by a long, craggy moraine ridge, and they contained blue and green glacial pools. At the eastern end of the ridge was a peak separating the Meren Glacier and the Carstensz Glacier. Carstensz Pyramid's north face rose 2,000 feet high, bathed in sunlight. We could clearly see dark grooves and cracks zigzagging up the slab. Bob pointed out the routes of the previous parties that had climbed the face, and then traced the new route that we hoped would lead us to the summit. It was a black crack, bottom-to-top right smack in the center of the face. "I feel like I know that wall as well as anyone possibly could without ever being there," Bob said.

We pitched base camp in the Meren Valley, at the foot of the glacier. We gave the porters these instructions: 10 were to return to Iliaga, and six were to stay for 12 days while we climbed. Of course, it was fairly hopeless to expect them to understand such a complicated plan, and we didn't. We shook their hands and embraced them, and they all disappeared down the Meren Valley toward Tembagapura, a village near an American copper mine.

The mine is owned by Freeport Indonesia Inc., a subsidiary of the U.S.-based Freeport Minerals Company. It is a \$250 million enterprise with 1,983 employees. Its presence in such close proximity to Carstensz Pyramid is an unfortunate blot on a tableau of nature at its purest, and makes a mockery of the mountain's claim to remoteness. The mockery was vivid: garbage and graffiti where we made our base camp. It was impossible to put the situation in perspective without being sadly cynical. We had flown halfway around the world to a mysterious island inhabited by *continued*



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CARSTENZ PYRAMID

continued

people barely out of the Stone Age, trekked for six days through rain forests and Numerous Sinkholes and over icy mountain passes to find garbage overflowing from scattered oil drums and messages spray-painted on the rocks.

That night Bob and Geoff slept in the North Face dome tent, and I slept in the smaller Marmot Mountain Works two-

man, with half the climbing equipment tucked snugly at my feet (we stuffed the rest in one of the toppled oil drums).

It was the coldest night so far. We planned to start the ascent the next morning, so I organized my climbing rack in my tent, using the cozy yellow glow of a candle for light. Above the candle, hanging limply and looking kind of silly, were

my socks, dangling from a chain of carabiners in a futile attempt to dry by the candle's heat.

After sleeping for a couple of hours, I awoke, shivering. Wind was shaking the tent, and I could hear a glacial freshet hurrying somewhere in the darkness. I unzipped the tent flap and stuck my nose into the cold black air. The Meren Glacier was sprayed silver by a full moon that floated high above. I would watch the glacier over the next few days, and it always seemed to be the color of the sky, changing like a chameleon. There were days when the horizon line over the glacier was completely lost, as if sky and ice had merged.

The Dani believe the sun is a woman who dresses like a warrior. She climbs a tree in the east every dawn, walks across the sky during the day and climbs down a tree in the west at dusk. The moon is a man who looks over her at night. I gazed at the moon a while, and then returned to the tent for a couple more hours of fitful sleep.

Our plan was to spend three or four days climbing two easier routes to the summit, in order to acclimatize to 16,000 feet and learn the mountain, to prepare for the north face attempt, our ultimate objective. On the first day we tried a traverse to the summit from the east, an appealing route because it looked relatively non-technical, and had been climbed only once before—by the famous Tyrolean mountaineer Reinhold Messner. We began at the edge of the Carstenz Glacier—at 222 acres it is slightly less than half the size of the Meren Glacier—and climbed westward over a series of sawtooth peaks. We had to shinny out on their edges, which were so sharp we couldn't lower our crotches on them (the running joke of a previous expedition had been that the chief danger was castration), to a 30- or 40-foot rappel at the end. Then we would gradually climb upward, often over scree, to the next peak. But we had trouble finding our way between the peaks, and lost about three hours. So, rather than spend the night on the mountain, we descended.

We had accomplished two important things. First, we had climbed to nearly



High above a glacial lake in the Yellow Valley, Sam inches up the sheer wall of the north face.

16,000 feet and had experienced no major setbacks because of altitude, although we all had headaches—mine in my eyes; I found myself turning my head stiffly in order to keep from moving my eyeballs, but aspirin relieved the discomfort. Second, and just as important, we had learned a lot about what kind of team we were. Over supper that night—with the moon lighting the dark blue sky, and after I had lobbed a rock at a red-eyed rat that was stalking our freeze-dried beef Stroganoff and terrorizing Geoff—we agreed we each had an important weakness. Geoff's was his damn-the-torpedoes, full-speed-ahead approach. Bob's was his cautiousness. They worked well as a team because one's weakness canceled out the other's. Mine was impatience. I couldn't change overnight, Bob and Geoff would have to accept my weakness as I would theirs.

The next day we decided to retrace the path of the very first ascent of the Pyr-

amid, by Austrian Heinrich Harrer in 1962. It was a traverse from the west. We rose at five, well before first light, and stepped out of our tents into a heavy mist. We ate breakfast in the darkness, a mass of oatmeal, sugar, raisins, butter and powdered milk, so sweet and lumpy it was hard to swallow. With our souvenir kabewaks, native penis sheaths, in our packs (for a photo of us wearing them on the summit), we broke camp and set out for the base of Carstensz Pyramid.

With the mist lifting, we climbed all morning. Most of the time we scrambled up scree slopes, which were as monotonous as the muddy hills had been. Still training. I thought, itching to get to the real climbing. I was discovering the difference between mountaineering and rock climbing.

At noon we came around a corner and were confronted by a tiny crack creeping diagonally up the rock for 20 feet, requiring a series of moves more difficult

than anything we had encountered so far. The rock hung outward. There were a few tiny footholds, but they were almost useless because gravity would be tugging our toes out and away from the rock. It would be an extremely strenuous few moves, and we knew it would be the crux of this route.

Geoff struggled on the crack for about 20 minutes, then ran out of strength and fell away from it. Belaying from below, I caught and held him suspended in the air in his harness. I suggested he come down and remove his pack, which was 30 pounds tugging on his shoulders, pulling him back and draining energy from his arms. He dismissed any necessity to lighten his load and went back at the rock. He fell again. I lowered him down to the belay stance with me, and he removed his pack and rested.

Without a pack, though with less strength, he tried the crack again. This time he got near the top *continued*

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CARSTENSZ PYRAMID

continued

before he fell. It was a sudden fall, and he hit hard against the rock before the rope stopped him. "I'm blind!" he shouted. "Is my eye bleeding?" He felt no blood, and, satisfied that the injury was not severe, he quickly settled down, dangling in his harness, cupping his eye with his hand and cursing.

The pain and blurry vision seemed to make Geoff even more determined. After resting a few minutes he went back at the rock and squinted and cursed some more; this time he placed a foot in a nylon strap he had anchored in the crack with a nut. He had been climbing free, but now, by stepping into the sling, he was going to climb on aid. Using another sling, he inched around a corner at the top of the crack. Bob and I followed, the climbing much easier for us because we used the slings Geoff had placed. It took some 50 minutes to climb those 20 feet, too slow a pace if we were to reach the summit and get down before dark.

There were places on the route where we could virtually spit to the ground on either side. The belay stance below the crux had been one of those places: it was on a small ridge wide enough for a secure stance but narrow enough to fall. I was anchored by a sling Geoff had wrapped around a cantaloupe-sized rock loosely lodged in a crack in a big boulder. Upon seeing the anchor I had mumbled, "This is ridiculous," as I lifted out the rock with one hand. Geoff said, "Don't worry, it'll hold. If I fall, the force will pull you down on the rock anyhow." I put the rock back and settled into the shaky stance without argument, figuring it was his decision, not mine. It was his life, not mine. I was wrong, of course, on both counts. And I had broken the promise I had made to myself that first night in Jayapura, when I recognized that it might be important to keep my guard up with Geoff.

When Geoff fell the third time and his protection popped out, I had been jerked off my feet and swung about five feet into the face Geoff was climbing. By catching myself against the face, I had kept most of the

pressure off the loose rock and it went untested. If another piece of Geoff's protection had popped out, the rock would have gotten a very serious test. It seemed amusing to me that you could go down either way here, left or right, forward or backward, by your own stupidity or someone else's. The sinkholes were numerous. Then it seemed perverse that it seemed amusing.

An hour later we reached the summit. We gazed down the south face, an ice climb that was challenging as recently as a decade ago, but, because of the rapid recession of the glaciers, is mostly a trudge today. Smaller hanging glaciers were draped like bibs over a maze of steep ridges crisscrossed by deep gorges. The craggy peaks at the western edge of the Snow Mountains disappeared into the mist. Behind that mist, in five short miles, the elevation dropped 10,000 feet to the jungle, and beyond lay the Arafura Sea and the Indian Ocean. To the east were more outcroppings, one of them snowy Wollaston Peak, named for A.F.R. Wollaston, the Englishman who made the first, futile expedition to Carstensz in

1910, and whose passion and vision had been realized only by others.

The descent went quickly. We traversed in the snow on the shaded back of the mountain, slid down scree slopes, down-climbed, and made seven rappels on the face. But we were caught by nightfall during the 45-minute hike from the mountain to base camp, and we had yet to cross the moraine ridge that separated the valleys. We had only one headlamp with us, which Geoff wore. It made blurry rainbows and yellow streaks in the darkness before his bad eye. We were unroped, traversing a steep scree slope. Eventually we had to go down, but not yet; somewhere in the black void below us—maybe 100 feet away, maybe 10 feet—was a cliff. At every move the scree threatened to roll away under our feet like marbles, carrying us clanging desperately down through the dark. I slipped and gasped more times than I can remember; for days afterward, dirt from the slope remained under my fingernails.

We wandered back and forth for a couple of hours. I watched the small beam of light on Geoff's head dim with his voice as he wandered away into the blackness and mist along the slope, looking for a trail, then reappear as he came back unrewarded. We debated in the dark about what to do, our confused shouts coming out of the night at each other. Eventually Geoff found the way down, around the cliff, and we staggered to camp and went straight to sleep, successful but not feeling very much like it.

The next day Geoff's eye was much better, and we prepared for the climb of the north face. Waiting out the afternoon's rain, we gobbled a three-pound tin of chocolate butter cookies in one sitting, which made us all feel better. We set the alarm for 4:45 a.m. the next morning, and the first sound we heard after its buzz was the thumping of rain on our tent. The rock would be unclimbable, impossibly slippery, so we would have to wait. Geoff was stir-crazy by noon and went out in the rain to scramble up the Midden-spitz, the peak separating the



Rappelling rapidly down, the climbers finally work as a real team.

continued

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Meren and Carstensz Glacier. Bob and I stayed inside the tent, ate candy bars and read—he *The Snow Leopard*, I *Huckleberry Finn*, having finished the former on the trek.

Dawn arrived the next morning as we were scrambling toward the north face. I looked up from its base and could see only half of it, gray clouds hiding everything above the Grand Traverse (so named by Bob), a wide belt where we hoped to bivouac that night. It had rained all night, and the rock was wet and cold and slippery. I was too tired to be nervous. Geoff led off, climbing an eight-inch-wide vertical crack, and was soon 100 feet up the face.

The crux came early, before noon. It was a classic overhanging ledge, extending about nine feet from the face and creating a roof. The crack that led Geoff there continued up the overhang, but got very narrow. Geoff could try to climb that crack, or he could carefully traverse to his left about 15 feet and attempt a crack where the overhang appeared smaller.

"Whoa! That's one big overhang!" Geoff shouted down to Bob and me. "Every time I get closer to it the perspective changes." Geoff felt he could climb the crack to his left free and the one above him with aid. He shouted down to us for opinions, and Bob and I advised him to traverse over to the easier crack. But the longer Geoff studied the overhang, the more he felt he could free-climb the harder crack. At the bottom edge of the overhang, he wedged a #7 hex, a hollow hexagon of aluminum, for protection and tried to climb over the lip.

He fell twice, both times gently. But just before the second fall, he had managed to fit in another piece of protection, a #3 hex, about the size of a walnut. He attached a sling to the hex and resorted to aid-climbing by putting his foot in the sling. He reached over his head blindly, out and up to the top of the overhang, his fingers slipping the rock and groping for something to grab. There was nothing but smooth, wet rock



After the climb, Geoff heads across the Meren Glacier toward "Kikes Peak."

When it spit him off, his foot slipped through the sling and it flipped him; he dangled upside down from the overhang, 300 feet above the ground, secured only by the hex he had wiggled into a crack two fingers wide.

Belaying him from below, I lowered Geoff about six feet as he wrestled himself upright and swung back to the rock under the overhang. He traversed over to the easier crack, where he found the overhang to be only about six feet, and free-climbed it after a lesser struggle.

As I climbed the face toward the overhang, it began to drizzle, then to hail and finally to snow. Geoff was just above me, belaying from the roof of the overhang, making suggestions and giving encouragement. I reached out to the overhang, twisting and stretching as far as my joints would permit, and pulled with as much strength as my muscles could provide, while Geoff kept the rope taut.

After a lot of grunting and kicking at the air with my feet, I pulled myself up on the roof with Geoff. The crack continued above the overhang, but it didn't widen, rarely could we squeeze anything broader than our hands and the toes of our climbing shoes into it. Often the only footholds were loose clumps of vegetation growing from the crack. They threatened to crumble out at their roots, so we tread on them gingerly. Because Geoff was above me, he would be able to catch me if I fell, and I could catch Bob below me, minimizing the drop, but Geoff was up there on the leading end of the rope—the "sharp" end, as climbers call it—often

unprotected, 800 feet off the ground, standing on loose little clumps of grass and clinging to a wall of rock while icy water dribbled down his sleeves to his armpits.

The crack eventually spread into a chimney, which we squeezed into. We inched upward by shuffling, using our arms, and elbows, backs and feet for leverage. It was grungy climbing, with all kinds of muck dropping on us, but we couldn't move out onto the face because it was so slippery.

We climbed the rest of the day, a trio of voices in bright clothing moving up the rock through a gray mist. I would watch Geoff disappear above me, then hear his voice when he reached the end of the pitch. Then I would shout down to Bob, deep in the mist below me, and soon he would climb up out of it. Bob and Geoff saw each other infrequently.

The sixth and final pitch of the day was the nicest. We once looked down to see a long cloud blow away, revealing the Yellow Valley. The aquamarine ponds on its floor looked like swimming pools seen from an airplane. Occasionally during the afternoon we heard thunder rumbling over the jungle behind the mountain.

The Grand Traverse had an ethereal quality to it. It was dusk, and everything was in shades of gray: the rock, the sky, the mist, the haze drifting between gendarmes, spires that rose like cement columns, and over narrow scree slopes that weaved around like sidewalks. Compared to the rest of the mountain, the Grand Traverse was almost benign. It felt like halftone.

We found a concave boulder, and the three of us curled up against it, with a view down the top slope of the Grand Traverse, over the edge of the mountain and across the two valleys to the Noordwand. We lay our nylon ropes down like a rag to insulate ourselves from the cold rock, put on every stitch of clothing we carried, crawled into our bivvy sacks and pulled them over our heads, ate a few candy bars for dinner, and sat there

continued

CARSTENSZ PYRAMID

continued

12 hours, freezing. Actually, the temperature was in the 20s, which, as mountaineering bivouacs go, is like having a heat wave. I thought of climbers who spend a week of bivivies in temperatures much colder, and was awestruck.

I slept an hour at most, all in pieces. Bob and Geoff not much more than that. We repeatedly rearranged ourselves as we tried to keep from falling out of the lap of the rock. We didn't talk much, except to grumble; we sang *Happy Birthday* to my sister in Rhode Island; I planned every day of my life for the next eight months and asked what time it was a lot. As dawn approached, I thought the sun was stuck.

When it appeared at last, the sun was framed by a window on top of Ngga Pulu. By the time we broke camp, the sun had simply disappeared from the window without ever rising, and all that remained were gray clouds.

It took an hour or so to feel our feet again, for they had gone numb. Immediately after we started climbing, we were on firm, dry rock. The wind had thinned the clouds, and the sun was hitting our backs; it felt like October. When we looked over our shoulders we could see both glaciers below us, a pale, icy blue, reflecting the sky.

Bob was exhausted from the sleepless night, and was moving slowly at the bottom of the rope. I was excited about having great climbing at last. Brittle needles of limestone made the climbing easy, but they were so sharp my golf gloves were torn to shreds. I took them off, and once when I retied a shoe noticed blood on the laces from cuts on my hands, the fingers punctured as if by tacks.

We climbed through a window that led from a chimney to the face, and the wind almost blew us back. We looked straight up and saw about 600 feet of big-wall climbing to the summit. We felt we had it in the bag: no more overhangs, no more mucky chimneys, no more grassy cracks, no more *drizzle*. Just the face and fair weather; almost like rock climbing. We looked straight down to the ground, about 1,400 feet. There were six or seven glacial pools scattered on the Yellow Valley floor, some aqua, some emerald, some pearl, some chalky.

Through the middle of the day we climbed steadily up the rock, five ver-

tical pitches to the summit, alternating leads. Because it was our second time on the summit in five days, we felt more at ease when we got there. We crawled around the rocks a while, trying to find the best spot for a photograph. Geoff took off his clothes and put on his *kubewak* again, as we all had four days earlier, and posed for another photo in case the first didn't come out. We looked off to the south but saw nothing but a sea of white clouds. When we felt our body hair rising and heard our cashmbers humming from static electricity, Bob suggested—fairly frantically—that we get our buns down quick, unless we wanted to become human lightning rods.

None of us wanted to spend another night on the mountain. Time was short: it was about three, which left only 3½ hours of daylight, putting pressure on us to make a rapid descent. We couldn't afford mistakes or to waste a minute.

Before we could begin rappelling down the face we had to cut along a 200-yard traverse on a snow ledge that slanted down the south side. We clipped into the rope and traveled along the ledge until we came through a notch and then down a long, snowy ramp that led to the eastern edge of the face. We leapt down in long rappels, a couple of them completely suspended and inside deep chimneys. It was like sliding down a long fire pole into a mine shaft. This was our third time over the same descent route, and we were getting the system down. Geoff would rappel first, then head off to place the anchor for the next rappel; Bob and I would follow, coiling and carrying our two 150-foot ropes. We worked with polish, better than at any time so far. Failure to work smoothly had disappointed and frustrated me throughout the expedition, and it felt good to finally be a team. We hit bottom at dark and went back to camp and a cold dinner of chicken chop suey and tuna à la Neptune; our stove was out of kerosene.

The next morning, a Sunday, I started hiking to Tembagapura. The plan was for me to try to retrieve the passports, while Bob and Geoff would traverse the Noordwand and climb a virgin peak Bob had had his eye on, before joining me in Tembagapura. They wanted to name it Kikes Peak, both of them being Jewish and having a sense of humor.

The hike to Tembagapura couldn't

have been nicer, although I was exhausted and dirty and isolated enough to feel like the sole survivor of some terrible epic. The sun was shining yet again as I walked down through the Meren Valley. Carstensen Pyramid rose on my left and the Noordwand on my right. Three-and-a-half miles below in Carstensen Meadow, the mountain ridges tapered and their walls tamed from rock to vine, with exotic-sounding birds calling from them.

Soon I heard a bulldozer. I followed the trail toward the sound and passed the Erlsberg, whose 600-foot-high cliffs blend into an open-pit mine. When I reached a dusty road I hopped a ride on a truck to the foreman's office. The Indonesian foreman greeted me with bewilderment, but took me down in the tram line that drops 2,000 feet, all of it through thick clouds, the world's longest unspooled tram, to the mill, where after another 2,300-foot drop over a twisting gravel road lay "Coppertown," Tembagapura, population 3,300. About 200 are American miners and their families.

I was delivered to the Indonesian townsite superintendent, who offered me a cold beer in the living room of his pre-fab house while in the next room his children watched two television sets, one a color console playing a video cassette of Walt Disney cartoons.

That night I lay in bed in the stuff dormitory after a hot shower and a dinner of barbecued chicken with four helpings of everything in sight. The mine had damaged the trip to Carstensen Pyramid by announcing its presence in the graffiti and garbage at base camp. Now, as I rested between its sheets with my belly full of its comforts, it was spoiling the climb. Of course, no one was forcing me to eat its chicken and sleep in its bed, but there was nowhere else to go. It was naive to think that Tembagapura would be a native village like Ilaga, that such a village could even exist next to a \$250 million American enterprise, a veritable Yankee industrial Atlantis in the jungle.

Actually, there was a native village: Wan. It was a Damal slum, built from Tembagapura's waste on a hillside in the valley. The denizens of Wan (and Upper Wan, as Bob called its sister slum higher up the hillside) lacked the spirit of their brothers in Ilaga. I tried recording their songs, but they mumbled self-conscious-

continued

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ly, like people singing the national anthem at a football game.

Bob and Geoff arrived the next evening, three days early. They had completed their snow traverse of the Noordwand, over both glaciers as well as Naga Pulu, and had been on their way toward Kikes Peak when they ran into the porters heading back to Ilaga. At that moment, it seemed just too complicated to organize the porters around another plan, so they took them back to base camp, collected the rest of our gear and trekked to the mine. They gave the porters our worn ropes and much of our clothing as a final farewell and bonus. Later, Bob and Geoff were sorry they had given up so easily on their unclimbed mountain.

Over dinner, while watching them eat their lamb stew in the mine mess as ravenously as I had my first meal there, I reported on the passport situation. Someone would have to return to Ilaga to get them. I was rested, but at the moment my feet were too swollen to get my boots on. There was no airstrip at the mine on which a bush plane could land, but the mine had two helicopters. However, it had no reason to fly to Ilaga.

The mine accorded us every physical comfort, but an American manager made it clear that they didn't appreciate having to look after passers-through. We were told we were "uninvited guests."

However, the mining company could hardly load us up with barbecued chicken and shove us off toward Ilaga. And we couldn't leave the country without our passports. And we couldn't get our passports without the mine's assistance, at least not quickly, though we didn't expect the mine management to bail us out. But they wanted to get rid of us and get back to digging copper. "For all we know, you're an environmentalist," one manager told me with a grin that made me think he wasn't joking.

The Freepot helicopter made a weekly vegetable run to Beoga, a village an easy two-day trek from Ilaga, and it was agreed that one of us would go along. Geoff went one morning, only to return 15 minutes later when the chopper couldn't get above the cloud ceiling over the valley. The next day he was bumped for a higher-priority passenger. And the following day the mist was too thick for takeoff. The mine finally offered to let us charter its second helicopter.

Our pilot was a likable Texan whose favorite word was "junko," which is what he figured we were for climbing mountains. He said the only humans he'd ever seen crazier than us were some guys who dived off a bridge connected by a bungee cord, on *That's Incredible!* When Geoff told him that he had been one of those guys, the Texan just shook his head as if to say, "It figures." He had most recently flown for an oil company off the Louisiana coast, but ultimately found flying back and forth across water without challenge. He believed his duty in Tembagapura was the best civilian helicopter pilot's job in the world. The flying was so demanding, the country so fantastic! He figured he was in the right place and right situation if World War III broke out; he could take his chopper and fill it with supplies and load up his Vietnamese wife and handsome young son and go live in the jungle. He had his gold-plating gear, and he knew just the spot.

The helicopter rose out of a mist at daybreak, straight up over Tembagapura before banking away. In an hour we were over Ilaga's tin roofs. We landed next to the chamar's shack, amid hundreds of whooping Western Dians.

The chamar was not impressed. He greeted us unsmiling at the door of his shack. "Please, sit down," he said to me, motioning to a chair at the table. Bob and Geoff waited outside while I bargained for our passports.

"Where are the porters?" he asked. "Haven't you seen them?" I replied. He informed me that they were my responsibility, and because they hadn't arrived yet, that must mean they were working overtime. He recalculated their fee and discovered I had not paid him enough. "You must pay 45,000 rupiah [\$72 more]," the chamar said. So I did, and he smiled for the first time, and handed over the passports. I hopped like Gumsnake's Chester (an infection had sprouted on my thigh in fertile Tembagapura) back to the helicopter, jubilant. We lifted out of a crowd of cheering Dians and sped to Tembagapura, arriving just moments before the mist sealed it for the day. We dived into what looked like *The Twilight Zone*—a thick fog with crawling slimy vines at its fringes—and Tembagapura magically appeared beneath it.

The next morning we took a Freepot

bus over the 65-mile dirt road to the airstrip on the coast and flew off. Bob to Bali, Geoff to Hong Kong and I to Singapore, each for a couple days R&R before returning to the U.S.

We had become the sixth party to climb the north face of Carstensz Pyramid. We put a new route on the face. We may have been the first party to climb it free.

A Californian named Bruce Carson climbed the north face solo in 1973. There is a very good chance he freed it; his account of the expedition in the *American Alpine Journal* is brief to the point of failing to say. Maybe it wasn't important to him. Carson was killed in 1975 when he fell through a cornice on the summit of Trisul, a 23,362-foot peak in the Indian Himalayas. He was 24. Royal Robbins wrote of Carson in the *American Alpine Journal*, "He was an unusually brilliant rock climber, who could draw the line fine without getting flustered." Maybe he never told anyone whether he freed it or not.

I like to think he did. The man climbed the mountain solo.

Since our return to the States, Bob has gone back to Penn to study neuroanatomy. When he settled into an apartment in Philadelphia, he kept hearing "fairly intense discussions" of street crime. He said Philadelphia's the most dangerous place he's been in years.

I spent two months reliving the expedition through some 2,000 slides, 14 hours of tapes and God knows how many hours thinking and writing about it. I decided two things. I had tainted it for myself—though I hope not Bob and Geoff—by being so goal-oriented. Bob and Geoff named our route "Romance not Ego." It's a great name. The other thing I decided is that I would have either one of them as an expedition partner again.

Geoff entered Harvard Medical School last fall, and a month later had an accident. Climbing without a rope on boulders near Cambridge, Mass., he fell 25 feet, head first. He snapped a wrist and was unconscious for nine hours. He spent nine days in the hospital, and he lost a week somewhere, but most of his memory is back. He even caught up with his classes by semester's end. Broken wrist and all, he was playing tennis—at midnight. Geoff's doctor told him he was the luckiest sonofabitch he'd ever seen. **END**

FOR THE RECORD

A roundup of the week Feb. 23-March 1

Controlled by N. BROOKS CLARK

[illegible]

BOATING—LOUISIANA CRUDE, a 42-foot sleep-skip boat piloted by Dick Jennings and Tom Drayton, won the overall title in the SCRC series (page 17).

BOWLING—NAL ACOSTA defeated Marshall Holman 135-70 to win the \$100,000 Cleveland Open at North Olmsted, Ohio.

BOXING—MATTHEW SAAD MUHAMMAD retained his WBC light heavyweight title with an 11-round knockout of Vincent Johnson in Atlantic City, N.J.

GOLF—ANDY BEAN shot an 18-under-par 266 to win the \$100,000 Ray Hall Classic in Orlando, Fla. by seven strokes over Tom Watson.

HOCKEY—While many NHL playoff look-alikes at the opponent's (page 9), a few were content to aim at the nets in Quebec's 11-7 victory over Washington. Jacques Richard had a hot truck, as did Peter Stastny (four goals) and his brother Anton (three). The Nordiques then won their fifth game in a row, 3-3 over Boston, with Marc Tardif scoring twice. Calgary triumphed

3-1 at Vancouver and then topped the Islanders, who were then four games become of injuries, in an 11-4 romp that included a two-goal spree in an eighth-minute comeback. The Bruins' defense was solid, with defenseman going on marks and New York's bad luck was three goals. Another hot trick in the Flanagan 3-1 defeat of Hartford gave Nicholson a five-game total of eight goals and four assists. The Bruins' defense was solid, with the Islanders called up after 1980 No. 1 draft pick Brent Sutter, from the juniors. He scored the first goal of the season, and then hit the place winner in a 2-1 Hartford triumph at Los Angeles. St. Louis, which led the league with 10 wins, was 10-1-1 in the first 21 games, and won 7-2 on a Black Cat Johnson goal and Washington 1-4 as rookie Jason Peterson got his third hat trick of the season. In that game the Blues' Bruce Doolen scored the first goal, and the Capitals' Mike Gartner scored the third-place Philadelphia lost to Edmonton 4-1, and with Wayne Gretzky (nine) also scoring and missing twice, the Oilers won 4-1. The Oilers' first goal was by Buffalo 2-0, Colorado 6-5, with Rick Suter's game-tying shot the shootout, and Toronto 15-11 to close out the month between 79-80 and an fourth place in the standings.

HORSE RACING—**HU. RKT UP BLUE** 156 68L, ridden by Carlos Lopez, defeated You Boy by a length to win the \$178,350 Gulfstream Park Handicap. The 4-year-old ran the 1 1/4 miles in 2:07 1/4.

MOTOR SPORTS—DARRELL WALTRIP driving a Buick at an average speed of 114.994 mph won the Carolina 500 on the 1.067-mile oval of the North Carolina Motor Speedway at Rockingham. He finished 5.5 seconds ahead of Cale Yarborough, who also drove a Buick.

TENNIS—GENE MAYER defeated Roscoe Tanner 6-2, 6-4 to win the \$700,000 U.S. National Indoor Championships in Memphis.

SILVIA, HANIK beat Barbara Potter 6-2 6-4 to win a \$125,000 tournament in Seattle

TRACK & FIELD—FRANCISS LARRIEU of the U.S. established a women's world indoor record of 9:38.1 for the two-mile run at the national indoor championships in New York City, lowering her own mark of 9:39.4.

year in 1974. At the same time JEFF WOODARD had placed 7.7% to surpass the American indoor record set 7.7% established three years ago by Franklin Jones. In 1975, the American indoor record was set by a woman's indoor record in the 220-yard dash was a time of 23.27, to better Ronald Bryant's 1954-year record of 23.27. In 1976, the American indoor record was set by ERNEST DAVIS, a 100-yard dash in 16.99 seconds. SHERYL FLENNEL, set a women's world indoor record of 1:58.99 for the 440-yard relay. They also established a new American record in the 440-yard dash in 1:00.99, a 220-yard relay record, eclipsing the mark of 1:42.6 set by the Los Angeles Mercantile in 1977. In the same relay, the American record was set by GUY-LENN, a 440-yard dash in 1:00.99. CUMBERB, BRENDA PETERSON and DEANN GUTOWSKI set an American women's indoor record with a time of 3:48.46, lowering the mark of 3:49.9 set by the Los Angeles Mercantile in 1977. In the 1500-yard swim, complete one lap in 19 minutes. N.J. ELO KANNA had a three-time swim 73.47 — an American record set by George Petros in 1974.

DEON HOGAN of the U.S. established a world indoor record for the seasonally-tanned 400-yard dash with a clocking of 47.20 in Lincoln, Neb. He surpassed the mark of 47.32 set by Heri Cameron of Jamaica in 1980. At the same meet MERLENE OTTEY of Jamaica surpassed her own women's world indoor record of 33.12 in the 300-yard dash with a time of 33.31.

WILPOSTE—APPROVED By the NASL, the transfer of the Detroit Express to Washington, D.C. The item will be known as the Diplomat.

POURCHASED By entrepreneur Edgar F. Kaiser Jr. of the DENVER BRONCOS of the NFL for an estimated \$30 million.

TRADED By the Chicago Cubs, Outfielder DAVE EDWARDS, 32, who led the majors with 48 home runs in 1979, to the New York Mets for Outfielder STEVE HENDERSON, 35, and an undisclosed amount of cash.

THEO JESSE B. (Duke) MORRISON, 84, who scored 277 points in three seasons (1926-28) as a running back at the University of California at natural causes in Mid Valley Calif.

CREDITS

4—Richard Mackison 18.25—Andy Hayt 16—Richard Mackison 17—Andy Hayt 16—Tony Tomlin 15—Rich Clarkson 13.25—Tony Tomlin 14—Ashley Bop (left) Tony Tomlin (right) James Clarkson 16—Hugh Clark 14—Anthony Hestle 13.57—Eric Schwesky 10—Alan D. (2)

FACES IN THE CROWD

JILL PRICE
WASHOKE MOUNTAIN

Aug. 12, won the 1980 Junior Ladies Figure Skating Championship for competitors at the sixth and seventh (jun) levels, in San Diego She also won the New England title in December and the Eastern championship in January.

HARVEY SHODOLPH
 211024

Rudolph, 57, a sales promoter and an archer for only 4½ months, shot two "Robin Hood spin" arrows from 20 yards within 45 minutes in College Park, Ga. In his first formal shoot, 2½ months ago, he scored 298 points of a possible 300.

ALAN KLEIST
CHERRY, MD

Klein, a 25-year-old computer-science major at the University of Maryland, accumulated 262 master points in his first year of tournament competition to win the 1980 Rookie of the Year award of the American Contract Bridge League.



SAVE YOU
Be conservative.

Volz, a freshman pole vaulter at Indiana, surpassed the Big Ten conference indoor record for the second time in a month, clearing 18' 2 1/2" at the Big State Meet in Bloomington. It was the best American vault of the year.



CHERYL MILLER
Reviews, Editor

Chen, a 6' 3½" senior center at Santa Valley High and Chert, a 6' 2½" junior forward at Riverside Poly, set unofficial Southern California girls' single-game basketball scoring records. Chen, who is averaging 32.1 points a game, scored 61 in the Pioneers' 100-25 victory over Ukiahene High on Jan. 26. Six days later Chert broke that record by getting 77 in the Bears' 137-11 win over Norte Vista High. This season Chert is shooting 76% and has an average of 38.4 points a game.



CHERI GRAHAM
Sun Valley, Calif.

ner at Santa Valley High or forward at Riverside in California girls' single-rebounds. Chern, who is game, scored 61 in the over Hueneme High oneryl broke that record by 137-41 win over Norte Cheryl is shooting 76%

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AMERICAN RENEWAL

Sir,

The Feb. 23 issue of *SI* struck me as an especially important one. Henry Grunwald's essay, *American Renewal*, and John Underwood's brilliant admonition and declaration of hope, *A Game Plan for America*, are reflections of enlightened sports journalism at its best. They will be required reading for all of my students preparing to coach and teach. But the audience should be larger still. Sports fans, television executives, school officials and the greater army of parents and youngsters all should memorize Underwood's sports lesson: "Competition can't serve a society if it's antithetical. Winning at any cost and true sportsmanship are incompatible." They are shibboleths, to be sure, but we all have come perilously close to forgetting them.

JOHN LUCAS

Professor of Physical Education and
Sports Historian
The Pennsylvania State University
State College, Pa.

Sir,

I have long thought that losing can be as powerful a teaching tool as winning can. As John Underwood indicates, winning has become all-important in our society. I believe that this emphasis is misplaced. Rather, it is in the acceptance of a loss and in the lessons to be learned from losing that character building often occurs. Life deals us many cruel and seemingly unfair blows. Facing up to—and overcoming—losses on the athletic field may not totally prepare us for life's hardships, but they often instill in us important qualities such as humility and integrity. These lofty values provide us with the ability to pick ourselves up after we have been knocked down. They also help us to build a positive self-image, gain self-confidence and, consequently, contribute to society.

By instructing today's young athletes in how to lose properly, as well as in how to win graciously, our nation's coaches will accomplish their greatest task: the formation of mature, responsible individuals able to function together in this world.

MICHAEL STEVATER
East Lansing, Mich.

Sir,

Whether we like it or not there can be only a few champions, but as long as we hold true to the ideals put forth by John Underwood there need not be any real losers.

LORIN M. BURKE
Chicago

Sir,

Thanks to John Underwood for telling it

like it is. It was the frustration of trying to persuade others of the virtues of this type of philosophy that recently made me resign my position as director of recreation and parks in Del Norte County, Calif. My conviction that there are values to be derived from sports was implanted by coaches who cared and who gave their time to all who were interested. I believe that I am the product of my athletic experiences, and I am thankful that, though I was never a star, I was included in my school sports programs. I recently reviewed my yearbooks from Oakland Technical High and came across pictures of such outstanding athletes as John Brodie, Curtis Flood, Proverb Jacobs, Pervis Atkins and Ronald Dellums, now a U.S. Congressman. I offer my thanks to those special coaches who developed these well-known people and still had time for me.

The ball is in the court of today's coaches of young athletes. What are they going to do with it?

PAUL TAYLOR
Klamath, Calif.

Sir,

Congratulations to John Underwood and *SI* for presenting a lucid and intelligent "game plan." A responsible approach to sports that stresses participation, fair play and an athlete's commitment to his best effort is not a call for mediocrity. Excellence will always shine through, and we will still be treated to unbelievable and thrilling performances by those few athletes who have the skill, coaching and determination to test the bounds of their abilities.

NICHOLAS LEFFERTS
Westport, Conn.

Sir,

As a father of three sons who participate in sports, as a fledgling manager of a boys' baseball team and coach of a youth football team, and as vice-president of a construction company, I have found in John Underwood's article lessons to be learned for each of these endeavors.

JOHN C. MASCAIRO
Vice-President
Mellon-Sears Company
Pittsburgh

Sir,

It strikes me as odd that in the same issue in which you spoke of the need to discourage young athletes from having unrealistic dreams of making it to the pros and also of the dangers for youngsters of specialization in sports you would feature on the cover a 17-year-old hockey phenomenon who began his relentless push for glory when he was eight. It seems to me you are feeding the fires of short-term

pleasure and long-term pain. If you are serious about *American Renewal*, I suggest an editorial policy review.

JEFF MUNROE
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Sir,

I find it sickeningly arrogant that you publish a fine article like *A Game Plan for America* and then proceed to print in *FACTS IN THE CROWD* the exploits of a young soccer player who scored 12 goals in a 20-1 "victory." It's little things like this that perpetuate the attitudes you ask us to reconsider. In the future, please use your forum to bring us truly valuable lessons in good sportsmanship and competition.

TITO PUENTES
Soccer Coach
Boulder, Colo.

Sir,

If education beyond a certain point is to be a privilege rather than a right, we should also seek a return to the genuine student-athlete in college sports. College sports should be for college students. A minor-league system should be the primary training ground for the would-be professional athletes.

JACK ARONSON
Essex Junction, Vt.

Sir,

While I agree with your proposition that the win-at-all-costs attitude and the specialization of young athletes is detrimental to sports, your emphasis on athletes earned high-salaried businessmen is also not realistic. The implication seems to be that even though one might not become a professional athlete, athletics will make one a successful astronaut, president of a bank, etc. Why were there no quotes from the football player who is now a factory worker? Just as most high school athletes will never become professional athletes, neither will most of them become the next Plato, Dr. Spock, Bill Bradley or John McGinckley. However, athletes can help one succeed in the average areas of life. This point seems to have been neglected.

BUD ALEXANDER
Petersburg, Tenn.

Sir,

I subscribe to a sports magazine, not a sounding board for some pompous ass of an editor. Please confine this stuff to *TIME* and fill *SI* with illustrated sports.

FRED D. DENNENBERG
Lighthouse Point, Fla.

Address editorial mail to *SPORTS ILLUSTRATED*, Time & Life Building, Rockefeller Center, New York, New York, 10020.

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